note in Chaucer What he saith of ...
in ffen of folk stolann ...
of ... Lesse of ... book ...
offered up by ... in ...

Babington · 1560 · Jany 3°

The Wozkes of Geffray Chaucer newly printed, with dyuers wozkes whiche were neuer in print before: As in the table moze playnly dothe appere.

Cum priuilegio.

The finest piece of all Chaucer is in the black Lincoln folio 289 perfect

¶ To the kynges hyghnesse, my moste gracious soueraygne lorde Herry the eight, by the grace of god kynge of Englande and of Fraunce, defensor of the fayethe, and lorde of Irlande. &c.

AMonges all other excellencyes, moste gracious soueraygne lorde, wherwith almighty god hath endowed mankynde, a-bouue the residue of erthly creatures, as an outwarde declaracō of reason or reasonablenesse, wherin consysteth the symylitude of man vnto angels, and the differēce betwene the same and brute beestes, I verayly suppose, that speche or langage is not to be reputed amonges the smallest ornamentes. For therby is expressed the conceyte of one to another in open and playne sentence, whiche of the residue of erthly creatures, lacketh and is not gyuen amonges them, but by certayne meanes and derke signes, and that in fewe thynges hauynge course and operation onely of nature. This speche or langage, after the confusion of tonges, sprate by goddes puny-shemente for pryde and arrogance of people, hath ben by a certayne inuisible and supernatural, playsyd and myxtred in sundrye partes of the worlde, as felowshippes or compayngnes of folkes one with a nother chaunced, moche to the ouermarde expressyng of the thyng in worde or sounde, accordyng to that whereof it had meanynge or signification. But in processe of tyme, by dyuergence or poynte of people, after diuers fourmes, figures, and impressyons in metall, barkes of trees, and other matter vsed for memorye and knowlege of thynges than present or passed, sondry letters or scriptures were fyrst amonges the phenices by vsyed and founde, with suche myxtynges and ioynynges of one to another by a marueylous subtylyte and crafte, as counterfeyted was and is equiualent to the same langages. So as the conceyte of mannes mynde, whiche at the begynnynge was vsed to be declared by mouthe onely, came to suche poynte, that it was as sensybly and bi-ble expressed in writyng. Herupon en-sewed a great occasion and corage vnto them that shulde wryte, to compone and adorne the rudenesse and barbaryete of speche, and to forme it to an eloquent and ordynate per-fection, whereunto many and many gre-poetes and oratours haue highly employed their studyes and corages, leauynge there notable renoume of them selues, and exam-ple perpetuell to their posterite. Amonge other, the Grekes in all kyndes of scyences semed so to preuayle and so to ornate their tonge, as yet by other of right noble langa-ges can not be perfectly imitated or fol-lowed. The Latyns by example of the Grekes, haue gotten or wonne to them no small glorye, in the fourmynge, order, and or-dynge of that tonge. Out of the which two, yf it be well searched, that is to say Greke and Latyn, thoughe by corruption of speche it shulde seme moche other and haue ben deryued the residue of the langa-ges that be mixed with the letters or ca-racters of either of them bothe: But al-speches, those whiche moste approche to Latynne, be the Frenche and Spanysh tonges, of whome the one by corruption of the Gothes and Longobardes had his grammage, as Latyn spoken by Frenche-men of a barbare pronunciation. The other hauing also Latyn was by Vandales, Gothes, Hoores, Sarrazynes, and other so ma-tymes ouerthrowen, as manyfest it is now vnto what perfection they haue fourmed out of the latyn and barbare speches it is ynowe. Here note that, in comparyson the latyn is the Frenche tonge, which by vsyence of people of the same, is in fewe yeres passed so amended, as well in pro-nunciation as in writyng, that an Englysh man by a small tyme exercysed in that tonge hath not lacked grounde to vnder-stande the ryght ordinary therof. Though of ma-(whiche some shall scarsely beleue) Germayns haue so fourmed the other their langage, that in the same, is both moche plenty and as pere comparable to the phrase of the latyn, as the Frenche to-hathe. And verayly, I the as all these the rest haue ben thus vigilant and stu-dyous to meliorate or amende their langages hath there not lacked amonges vs Engly-men, which haue ryght well and notab-endeuo-

endeuoyred and employed them selues, to the beautifyeng and bettryng of thenglysshe tonge. ¶ Amonges whome mooste excellent prynce, my mooste redoubted and gracious soueraygne lorde, I your moste humble vassall, subiecte and seruaunte Wyllyam Thynne, chefe clerke of your kechyn, moued by a certayne inclynacion and zele, whyche I haue to here of any thynge soundynge to the laude and honour of this youre noble realme, haue taken great delectacyon, as the tymes and layseres myght suffre, to rede and here the bokes of that noble and famous clerke Geffray Chaucer, in whose workes is so manyfest comprobacyon of hys excellent lernynge in all kyndes of doctrynes and sciences, suche frutefulnesse in wordes, wel accordynge to the matter and purpose, so swete and pleasaunte sentences, suche perfection in metre, the compesycion so adapted, suche fresshnesse of inuencyon, compendyousnesse to narracion, suche sensyble and ornate, lackynge neyther matere ne mesure couenable in dispesycion, and suche sharpnesse of quicknesse in conclusyon, that it is moche to be marueyled, howe in hys tyme, when doutlesse all good letters were lyke to a slepe throughoute the worlde, as the enuye to hym either by the dispesycion and influence of the bodyes aboue, or by other ordynaunce of god, semed lyke and was in daunger to haue vtterly perysshed, suche an excellente poete in our tonge, shulde as it were nature repugnynge sprynge and arryse. For thoughe it had ben in Demosthenes or Homerus tymes, when all lernynge and excellencye of sciences flourysshed amonges the Grekes, or in the tyme that Cicero parfyt of eloquence amonges latyns lyued, yet had it ben a thyng right rare and straunge and worthy perpetuall laude, that any clerke by lernynge or wytte couthe them haue framed a tonge before so rude and imperfyte, to suche a swete ornature and compesycion, lykely if he had lyued in these dayes, beynge good letters so restored and reuyued as they be, if he were nat empeched by the enuye of suche as may tollerate nothynge, whyche to vnderstonde their capacite doth nat extende, to haue broughte it vnto a full and fynall perfection. Wherfore gracious soueraygne lorde, takynge suche delyte and pleasure in the workes of thys noble clerke (as is afore mencioned) I haue of a longe season moche desyred to rede and here the same: and as bokes of dyuers impryntes came vnto my handes, I rately and without grete study, myght and haue depreheended in them many errours, falsyties, and deprauacions, whiche euydently appered by the contrarieteres and altercations founde by collacyon of the one with the other, whereby I was moued and stryued to make dylygent serche, where I might fynde or recouer anye trewe copies or exemplaries of the sayde bookes, whereunto in processe of tyme, nat without coste and payne I attayned, and nat onely vnto suche as seme to be very trewe copies of those workes of Geffray Chaucer, which the before had ben put in prynte, but also to dyuers other newer tryll nowe imprinted, but remaynynge almoste vnknowen and in obliuyon, wherupon lamentynge with my selfe, the negligence of the people that haue ben in this realme, whe doutlesse there hery remysse in the seruynge forthe or amendement either of the billowes therof, to the great hynderaunce of the renowme of suche noble princes and valyaunte conquerours and capytayns as haue ben in the same, or also of the workes of inuencyon of the famous and excellente clerkes in all kyndes of sciences that haue florysshed therin. ¶ If whyche holde sciences it hathe pleased god as frely to nobelytate this yle as any other regyon of christendome: I thought in myne opynyon conuenyent cause my diligence, and that of hery honesty and loue to my countrey I ought no lesse to do, than to put my helpynge handes to the restauracion and bryngynge agayne to lyghte of the sayd workes, after the trewe copies and exemplaries aforesayd. And delyuynge with my selfe, who of all other were moste worthy, to whom a thynge so excellent and notable shulde be dedycate, whyche to my conceyte semeth for the admiracion, noueltie, and straungenesse that it myght be reputed to be of in the tyme of the authoure, in comparison, as a pure and fyne cryed precious or polyred werke all oute of a rude or indigest masse or matre, none couthe to my thynkynge occurre, that lyued, or in the tyme of Chaucer, was of as sufficyencye, but onely your moste royall, whyche by dyscreycon and iudgement, as moste absolute in wysedome and all kyndes of doctryne, couthe and

of his innate clemency and goodnesse, wolde adde or gyue any authorite herunto.

For this cause most excellente and in all vertues most prestant prince, I as humbly prostrate before your kyngly estate, lowlye supply and beseche the same, that it wol vouche safe to take in good parte my poore studye and desyrous mynde, in reducynge vnto lyght this so precious and necessarye an ornament of the tonge of thys youre realme, ouer pyrous to haue ben in any poynte loste, falsefyed, or neglected: So that vnder the shylde of youre moste royall protectyon and defence it may go forthe in publyke, and prevayle ouer those that wolde blemysshe, deface, and in many thynges clerely abolysshe the laude, renoume, and glorye heretofore compared, and meritoriously adquired by dyuers princes, and other of this sayd moste noble yle, whereunto nat onely straungers vnder preterte of hyghe lernynge and knowledge of theyr malycious and peruers mynde, but also some of your owne subiectes, blynded in folye and ignorance, do with great studye contende. Most gracious, victorious, and of god moste electe and worthye prince, my moste dradde souerayne lorde, in whome of vere merytye, dewtie, and succession, is renewed the glorious tytell of Defensor of the christen faythe, whiche by your noble progenytour, the greate Constantyne, somtyme kynge of this realme, and emperour of Rome was nexte God and his apostels, chefelye mayntayned, corroborate, and defended, almyghtye Jesu sende to your highnesse the contynuall and euerlastynge habundaunce of hys infynite grace. Amen.

¶ Thus endeth the preface.

¶ A table of all the names of the workes contayned in this volume.

¶ The preface.

The Caunterbury tales. f.
The Romant of the Rose ii.
Troylus and Creseyde iii.
The testament of Creseyde iiii.
The legende of good women, w̄ a balade v.
Boecius de Consolatione philosophie vi.
The dreame of Chaucer, with a balade vii.
The assemble of Foules viii.
The flour of Curtesy, with a balade ix.
Owre pyte is dred & berped in a gēryl herte x.
La bele dame sans mercy xi.
Iuuelyda and false Arcyte xii.
The assemble of Ladyes xiii.
The conclusyon of the Astrolobye xiiii.
The complaynt of the blacke knyght xv.
A prayse of women xvi
The house of Fame xvii.
The testament of Loue xviii.
The lamentacō of Mary Magdaleyn xix.
The Remedy of loue xx.
The complaynt of Mars and Venus xxi.
The complaynt of Mars alone xxii.
The complaynt of Venus alone, xxiii.
The letter of Cupyde xxiiii.
A balade of our Lady xxv.
A balade to kyng Henry the fourthe xxvi.
Of the Cuckowe & the Nightyngale xxvii.
Scogan vnto the yonge lordes and gentylmen of the kynges house xxviii.
A balade of good counsaile by Chaucer. xxix.
Dyuers other goodly balades. &c. xxx.

¶ Thus endeth the first table and here followeth the seconde.

¶ In this table we haue fonde any thynge that ye woll haue in this volume by the Folio, as followeth.

The prologes of the Caunterbury tales.

The knyghtes tale fo. Primo.
The Millers tale fo. xii.
The Reues tale fo. xv.
The Cokes tale fo. xviii.
The Man of lawes tale fo. xix.
The Squiers tale fo. xxv.
The Marchaunts tale fo. xxix.
The wyfe of Bathes prologue fo. xxxiiii.
The wyfe of Bathes tale fo. xxxvii.
The Freres tale fo. xl.
The Somnours tale fo. xlii.
The clerke of Oxenfordes tale fo. xlv.
The Frankeleyns tale fo. lv.
The seconde Nunes tale fo. lvii.
The prologue of ꝑ Chanōs yoman fo. lx.
The doctor of Phisykes tale fo. lxiii.
The Pardoners prologue fo. lxv.
The Pardoners tale fo. lxvi.
The Shypmans tale fo. lxix.
The Priores prologue fo. lxxi.
The Priores tale fo. eodem.
The tyme of sir Topas fo. lxxii.
The tale of Chaucer fol. lxxiii.

The prologues.

The Monkes prologue fo.lxxxiii.
The Monkes tale fo.eodem.
The tale of the Nunnes preest fo.lxxxviii.
The Manciples tale fo.xci.
The Plowmans tale fo. xciii.
The Persons prologue fo. C.
The persons tale fo.eodem.

¶ Explicit Caunterbury tales.

The Romaunt of the Rose fo. C.xx.

¶ Troylus and Creseyde is deuyded in to fyue bookes.

¶ The fyrst boke begynneth fo. C.lvii.
The seconde boke begynneth fo. C.lxiii.
The thirde boke begynneth fo. C.lxxii.
The fourth boke begynneth fo. C.lxxxii.
The fyfthe boke begynneth fo. C.xci.

¶ Explicit Troylus and Creseyde.

The testament of Creseyde fo. CC.ii.

¶ The legende of Good women hath all these folowyng. First.

¶ The prologue. fo. CC.v.
The legende of Cleopatras fo. cc.ix.
The leg.of Thysbe of Babylone fo.eodem
The legende of quene Dydo fo. cc.xi.
The leg.of Hipsiphile & Medea fo.cc.xiii.
The leg.of Lucrece of Rome fo.cc.xv.
The legende of Ariadne fo.cc.xvi.
The legende of Philomene fo.cc.xviii.
The legende of Phillys fo.cc.xviii.
The legende of Hypermestra fo. cc.xix.

¶ Explicit the legende of Good women.

¶ Boecius de Consolatione is deuyded in to fyue bokes.

The first boke beginneth fo. cc.xxi.
The seconde boke beginneth fo.cc.xxv.
The thirde boke begynneth fo.cc.xxxi.
The fourth boke begynneth fo.cc.xl.
The fyfth boke begynneth fo.cc.xlvii.

¶ Explicit Boecius de consolatione.

¶ All these workes folowyng be workes by them selfe.

The dreame of Chaucer fo.cc.liii.
The assemble of Foules fo.cc.lv.
The Flour of Curtesy fo.cc.lxiii.
Howe Pyte is deed &c. fo. cc.lxv.
Ladie daine sauns mercy fo. cc.lxvi.
Anelyda and false Arcyte fol.cc.lxx.
The assemble of Ladyes fo cc.lxxii.
The conclus.of thastrolaby fo.cc lxxix.
The cõplaynt of ỹ blacke knyzt fo cc.lxxxvii.
A praise of women fo.cc.xci.

¶ The house of Fame is deuyded in to thze bookes.

The first boke begynneth fo.cc.xcii.
The seconde boke begynneth fo. cc.xcv.
The thirde boke begynneth fo. cc xcviii.

¶ Explicit the house of Fame.

¶ The testament of Loue is deuyded in to thze bokes.

The fyrst boke begynneth fo. ccc ii.
The seconde boke begynneth fo.ccc vi.
The thirde boke begynneth fo.ccc xvi

¶ All these workes folowyng be workes by themselfe.

The lamentacion of Mary Magdalayne fo.ccc.xxiv.
The remedy of Loue fo.ccc.xxvi
The cõplaynt of Mars & Venus fo.ccc.xli.
The complaynt of Mars alone fo. xlvi.
The cõplaynt of Venus alone fo.xlvii.
The letter of Cupyde fo.eodem.
A balade of our lady fo.ccc.xlviii.
A balade to kyng Herry the viii fo.ccc xlviii.
Of the cuckowe & the nightingale fo.ccc.l.
Scogan vnto the yonge lordes and gentylmen of the kynges house fo.ccc.lii.
Dyuers other balades of Chaucer &c.

Thus endeth the table of al the workes.

¶ Eight goodly questyons, with their answers.

SOmetyme in Greece that noble regyon
There were eight clerkes of grete sciẽce
Philosophers of notable discretion
Of whom was asked, to proue their prudẽce
Eight questions, of derke intellygence
To whiche they answered after their entent
As here dothe appere playne and evydent

¶ The fyrst questyon, what erthly thyng

Is best, and to god moost comendable
The first clerke answered without tarying
Mannes soule, euer ferme and stable
In right, from trouthe nat variable
But nowe alas ful sore may we wepe
For coueityse hath brought trouthe a slepe

The seconde, what thyng is moost odious
A double man sayd the philosophre
With a virgyn face and a tayle venomous
With a fayre viru, and a false profre
A corrupte carych in a golden tree
It is a monster in natures lynage
One man to haue a double vysage

The thirde, what is the best dower
That maye be to a wyfe appropriate
A clene lyfe, was the clerkes answer
Without synne, chast, and inuyolate
From al discreyres, and spetches inornate
Or countenaunce, whiche shal be to dispyse
No tyre make, and no smoke wol aryse

The fourth question, what may ben may
Be called clene in chastyte
The fourth clerke answered, which alway
Euery creature is ashamed on to lye
Of whó euery man reporteth great honeste
Good maydens kepe your chastyte forthe
And remembre that good name is golde worth

Who is a poore man euer ful of mo
A couetous man, whiche is a pygon
He that in his herte can neuer saye ho
The more good, the lesse satisfaccyon
The richer, the worse of condicyon
Men in this cost, clepen him a nygarde
Sir Guy the bysbour is his stewarde

Whiche is a riche man without fraude
He that can to his good suffyse
What soeuer he hath, he yeueth god ȳ laude
And kepeth him clene from al couetyse
He desyreth nothyng in vngoodly wyse
His body is here, his mynde is aboue
He is a riche man, for god doche him loue

Who is a foole, is the seuenth demaunde
He that wolde hurte, and hath no powere
Might he myght, moche wolde he cómaunde
His malyce great, his myght nought were
He chyteth ful faste, ful lytel may he dere
Remaineth nat howe men haue sayd before
God sendeth a shrewde cowe a shorte horne.

Who is a wyse man, is the eight question
He that myght noye, and dothe no noyaunce
Myght punyshe, and leaueth punyssion
A man merciful without vengeaunce
A wyse man putteth in remembraunce
Sayeng, had I venged al myne harme
My cloke had nat be furred halfe so warme.

Explicit.

To the kynges moost noble grace,
and to the lordes and knyghtes of the garter.

TO you wele of honour & of worthinesse
Our christen king, the heire & successour
Vnto Iustinians deuout tenderesse
In faith of Iesu our redempteur
And to you lordes of the garter floure,
Of chyualry, as men you clepe and cal
The lorde of vertue, and of grace author
Graunt the fruit of your lofe neuer appal

O large lorde that bare the lyberalte
Of Constantyne, thensample and myrrour
To princes al, in humble benygnite
To holy churche a verray sustayneour
And pyller of our faith, and werryour
Agayne the heretykes bytter galle
Be fourthe be forthe, conteyne your fortune
Holde vp Cristes banner lette it nat falle

This yle or this had ben but herberlesse
Had be of your faith the force and vigour
And yet this day the lembes crabbyd merciles
Of enuy fayly to cerche a tyme and houre
To haue on vs your lyges a sharpe shoure
And to his seruytude vs awrye and thralle
But aye our trust in you our protectour
On your constaunce we a wayten alle

Cómaunderh that no wight haue hardynesse
O worthy kyng, our christen emperour
Of the faith to dispute more or lesse
Openly amonge people peregrour
Springeth al day, and engendreth rumour
Makeyh such lawe, and for ought may be al
Obserue it wele, there to be ye bettour
Dothe so, and god in glorie shal you stal

Prelordes eke, shyning in noble fame
To whiche appropried is the magnificaunce

Of

Of Chrisles cause, in honour of his name
Shour on, and put his foes to vtraunce
God wolde so, so wolde eke your legiaunce
To tho two pricketh you your duite
Who so nat kepeth this double obseruaunce
Of mercye and honour naked is he

Your style sayth, ye be foes to shame
Howe kyth of your fayth the perseueraunce
In whiche an heape of vs be halte and lame
Our christen kyng of Englande & of Fraūce
And ye my lordes with your alyaunce
And other faithful people that there be
Trust I to god, shal quenche al this noisaūce
And this lande sette in highe prosperite

Conquest of highe prowesse is for to tame
The wylde woodnesse of these myscreaunce
Right to the rote repe ye that same
Slepe nat this, but for goddes pleasaunce
And his mother, and in syguifyaunce
That ye ben of saynt Georges lynete
Do the him seruice and knightly obeysaunce
For Chrisles cause is his, wel knowen ye

Stiffe lande in that, ye shal greue & grame
The foe to peace, the norice of debaunce
That norist is ernest, resume it into game
Howe kythe of your belefe the constaunce
Lorde liege, & lordes haue in remembraunce
Lorde of al is the blysful Trinite
Of whose vertue the mighty habondaunce
Yeu herte and strength in faithful buyte.

Explicit.

When fauth fayleth in prestes sawes
And lordes hestes are holden fables
And robbery is holden purchace
And lechery is holden solace
Than shal the londe of Albion
Be brought to great confusyon

It falleth for euery gentyl man
To saye he best that he can
In maners absence
And the forbe in his presence
It cometh by kynde of gentyl blood
To cache away al heynesse
And gader togither wordes good
The werke of wysedome beareth wytnesse.

Finis.

The Launterbury tales.

Whanne that Aprill
with his shoures sote
The drought of Marche
had perced the rote
And bathed euery veyne
in suche licoure
Of whiche vertue engendred is the flour
Whan zephirus eke with his sote breth
Enspired hath euery holte and heth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram halfe his course yronne
And smale foules maken melodye
That slepen al nyght with open eye
So pricketh hem nature in hir corages
Than longen folke to go on pilgrymages
And palmers for to seken straunge strondes
To ferne halwes couthe in sondry londes
And specially fro euery shires ende
Of Englonde to Caunterbury they wende
The holy blysful martyr for to seke
That hem hath holpen, whan they were seke.

Ryght

Ryght

Ryght

And at a knyght than wyl I fyrſt begyn.

¶ The knyght. i.

A knyght there was, and ꝑ a worthy man
That fro the tyme that he fyrſt began
To ryden out, he loued chyualrye
Trouthe, honour, fredom, and curteſye
Ful worthy was he in his lordes warre
And therto had he rydden no man ſo farre
As wel in chriſtendome as in hethenneſſe
And euer had honour for his worthyneſſe
At Alyſaundre he was, whan it was won
Ful ofte tyme he had the bourde begon
Abouen all nacyons in Pruce
In Lettowe had he rydden and in Luce
No chriſten man ſo ofte of his degre
In Gernade at the ſyege had he be
At Algezer, and rydden in Belmarye
At Leyes was he, and alſo at Satalye
Whan they were wonne, and in the great ſee
At many a noble armye had he be
At mortal batayles had he ben fyftene
And foughten for our fayth at Tramyſſene
In lyſtes thries, and aye ſlayne his fo
This ilke worthy knyght had ben alſo
Somtyme with the lorde of Palathye
Ayenſt another hethen in Turkye
And euermore he had a ſouerayne pryſe
And though he was worthy he was wiſe
And of his porte as meke as is a mayde
He neuer yet no vilanye ne ſayde
In al his lyfe, vnto no maner wight
He was a verry perfyte gentyl knyght
For to tel you of his aray
His hors were good, but he was not hymſelf gay
Of fuſtyan he wered a gypon
Al beſmotered with his haubergeon
For he was late come fro his vyage
And wente for to don his pylgrymage.

¶ The Squyer. ii.

With him there was his ſonne a yong
Squyer
A louer and a lusty bachelere
Wyth his lockes crul as they were layde in
Of xxti yere of age he was I geſſe
Of his ſtature he was of euen lengthe
And wonderly delyuer, and of great ſtrength
And he had be ſomtyme in chyuauchye
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and in Picardye
And borne hym wel, as of ſo lytel ſpace
In hope to ſtande in his ladyes grace
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of freſhe floures, whyte and rede
Syngyng he was, or floytynge al the day
He was freſhe as is the month of May
Short was his gowne, wyth ſleues long and wide
Wel coude he ſyt on an horſe, and faire ryde
He coude ſonges make, and wel endyte
Juſte and eke daunce, portray and wel write
So hote he loued, that by nyghtertale
He ſlepte no more than doth the nightyngale
Curteys he was, lowly and ſeruyſable
And kerfte before his fader at the table.

¶ The Squyers yoman iii.

A yoman had he and ſeruauntes no mo
At that tyme, for hym lyſt to ryde ſo
And he was clad in cote and hode of grene
A ſhefe of pecocke arowes bryght and kene
Under his belt he bare ful thriftely
Wel coude he dreſſe his tackle yomanly
Hys arowes drouped not with fethers lowe
And in his hande he bare a myghty bowe
A not heed had he, with a broune vyſage
Of wodde craft wel couth he al the vſage
Upon his arme he bare a gay bracer
And by his ſyde a ſwerde and a bokeler
And on that other ſyde a gay daggere
Harneyſed wel, and ſharpe as poynte of ſpere
A chriſtofer on his breſt of ſyluer ſhene
An horne he bare, ꝑ bawdryke was of grene
A foreſter was he ſothly as I geſſe

¶ The Prioreſſe. iiii.

There was alſo a Nonne a Prioreſſe
That of her ſmiling was ſimple and coy
Her greteſt othe was by ſaynt Loye
And ſhe was called dame Eglentyne
Ful wel ſhe ſonge the ſeruyce dyuyne
Entuned in her noyce ful ſemely
And Frenche ſhe ſpake ful fetouſly
After the ſchole of Stratforde at bowe
For frenche of Parys was to her vnknowe
At meate was ſhe wel ytaught withal
She let no morſel fro her lyppes fal
Ne wete her fyngers in her ſauce depe
Wel couth ſhe carye a morſel and wel kepe
That no drop ne fel vpon her breſt
In curteſy was ſet ful moche her leſt
Her ouerlyp wyped ſhe ſo clene
That in her cup was no ferthynge ſene
Of grece, whan ſhe dronken had her draught

Fulsemely after her meate she raught
And sykerly she was of great disporte
And ful plesaunt, and amyable of porte
And payned her to counterfete chere
Of conte, and to be stately ful of manere
And to ben holden digne of reuerence
But for to speke of her conscience
She was so charytable and so pytous
She wolde wepe yf that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde
Of smale houndes had she that she fedde
With roste flesshe, mylke, or wastel breed
But sore wepte she yf any of hem were deed
Or yf men smote hem with a yarde smarte
And al was conscience and tender herte
Ful semely her wymple pynched was
Her nose tretes, her eyen gray as glas
Her mouth smale, and therto softe and reed
But sykerly she had a fayre forehead
It was almost a span brode I trowe
For hardely she was not vndergrowe
Ful fetys was her cloke as I was ware
Of smale coral about her arme she bare
A payre of bedes, gauded al with grene
And theron honge a broche of golde ful shene
On which ther was first write a crowned A
And after that Amor vincit omnia)
Another Nonne with her had she
That was her chapeleyn, and prestes thre

¶ The Monke. v.

A Monke there was, faire for the maystry
In out ryder, that loued venery
A manly man to ben an abbot able
Ful many a deynte horse had he in stable
And whan he rode men might hys bridel here
Gyngelyng in a whistlyng wynde as clere
And eke as loude, as dothe the chapel bel
There as this lorde was keper of the cel
The rule of saint Maure and of saynt Benet
Bycause it was olde and somdele streyt
Thys ylke Monke let olde thynges pace
And held after the newe worlde the space
He yaue not of the texte a pulled henne
That sayth, that hunters be not holy men
Ne that a monke whan he is recheles
Is lykened to a fysshe that is waterles
This is to say, a Monke out of his cloystre
This ylke text yelde he not worthe an oystre
And I say his opinion was good (wood
What shulde he study, and make himselfe
Upon a boke alway in cloystre to powre
Or swynke with his handes, or labowre
As Austyn byd, howe shal ỹ worlde be serued
Let Austyn haue his swinke to him reserued
Therfore he was a pryckeasour a ryght
Greyhoudes he had as swift as foule of flyght
Of pryckynge and of huntynge for the hare
Was al his lust, for no coste wolde he spare
I sowe hys sleues purfled at the hande
With grise, and that the fynest in a lande
And for to faste hys hoode vnder the chynne
He had of golde wrought a curious pynne
A lowe knot in the greatest ende there was
His heed was balde, and shone as any glas
And eke his face, as he had ben anoynte
He was a lorde ful fat and in good poynte
His eyen stepe, and rolynge in his heed
That stemed as a furneys of a leed
Hys bootes soupple, his hors in great estate
Nowe certaynly he was a fayre prelate
He was not pale as a forpyned ghost
A fatte swan loued he best of any roost
Hys palfray was browne as is a bery

¶ The Frere. vi.

A Frere there was a wanton and a merry
A lymytour, a ful solempne man
In al the ordres foure is none that can
So moche of dalyaunce and fayre langage
He had made ful many a mariage
Of yonge women at his owne cost
Vnto his order he was a noble post
Ful welbeloued, and famylyer was he
With frankeleyns ouer al in his countre
And with worthy women of the toun
For he had power of confessyoun
As he sayd hym selfe, more than a curate
For of his order he was licenciate
Ful swetely herde he confessyon
And plesaunt was his absolucyon
He was an easy man to gyue penaunce
There as he wyst to haue a good pytaunce
For vnto a poore ordre for to gyue
Is signe that a man is wel yshryue
For yf he gaue, he durst make auaunt
He wyst that a man was repentaunt
For many a man is so harde of herte
That he may not wepe though him smerte
Therfore in stede of weepynge and prayres
Men mote gyue syluer to the poore freres
His typpet was aye fassed ful of knyues
And pynnes, for to gyue fayre wyues
And certaynly he had a merry note

And at a kyngthe than wyl I fyrſt begyn.

¶ The Knyght. i.

A Knyght there was, and ſ a worthy man
That fro the tyme that he fyrſt began
To ryden out, he loued chyualrye
Trouthe, honour, fredom, and curteſye
Ful worthy was he in his lordes warre
And therto had he ryden no man ferre
As wel in chriſtendome as in hethenneſſe
And euer had honour for his worthyneſſe
At Alyſaundre he was, whan it was won
Ful ofte tyme he had the bourde begon
Abouen all nacyons in Pruce
In Lettowe had he ryden and in Luce
No chriſten man ſo ofte of his degre
In Gernade at the ſege had he be
At Algezer, and ryden in Belmarye
At Leyes was he, and alſo at Satalye
Whan they were wonne, and in the great ſee
At many a noble armye had he be
At mortal batayles had he ben fyftene
And foughten for our fayth at Tramyſſene
In lyſtes thries, and aye ſlayne his foo
This ilke worthy knyght had ben alſo
Somtyme with the lorde of Palatye
Ayenſt another hethen in Turkye
And euermore he had a ſouereyne prys
And though he was worthy he was wyſe
And of his port as meke as is a mayde
He neuer yet no vylanye ne ſayde
In al his lyfe, vnto no manner wight
He was a verry perfyt gentyl knyght
But to tel you of his aray
His hors were good, but he was not hymſelf gay
Of fuſtyan he wered a gypon
Al beſmotred with his haubergeon
For he was late come fro his vyage
And wente for to don his pylgrymage.

¶ The Squyer. ii.

WIth him there was his ſonne a yong
Squyer a louyer and a luſty bachelere
With his lockes crul as they were layde in preſſe
Of twenty yere of age he was I geſſe
Of his ſtature he was of euen lengthe
And wonderly delyuer, and of great ſtrengthe
And he had be ſomtyme in chyuachye
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and in Pycardye
And borne hym wel, as of ſo lytel ſpace
In hope to ſtande in his ladyes grace
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of freſhe flowres, whyte and rede
Syngyng he was, or floytynge al the day
He was freſhe as is the month of May
Short was his gowne, with ſleues long and wyde
Wel coude he ſyt on an horſe, and fayre ryde
He coude ſonges make, and wel endyte
Juſte and eke daunce, portray and wel write
So hote he loued, that by nyghtertale
He ſlepte no more than doth the nyghtyngale
Curteys he was, lowly and ſeruyſable
And carfe before his fader at the table.

¶ The Squyers yoman iii.

A Yoman had he and ſeruauntes no mo
At that tyme, for hym lyſt to ryde ſo
And he was clad in cote and hode of grene
A ſheef of pecocke arowes bryght and kene
Under his belt he bare ful thriftely
Wel coude he dreſſe his tackle yomanly
His arowes drouped not with feders lowe
And in his hande he bare a mighty bowe
A not hed had he, with a broune vyſage
Of wodde craft wel coude he all the vſage
Upon his arme he bare a gay bracer
And by his ſyde a ſwerde and a bokeler
And on that other ſyde a gay dagger
Harneyſed wel, and ſharpe as poynte of ſpere
A chriſtofer on his breſt of ſyluer ſhene
An horne he bare, the bawdryke was of grene
A forſter was he ſothly as I geſſe

¶ The Prioreſſe. iii.

THere was alſo a Nonne a Prioreſſe
That of her ſmylyng was ſymple and coy
Her greteſt othe was by ſayne Loy
And ſhe was called dame Elyanore
Ful wel ſhe ſonge the ſeruyce dyuyne
Entuned in her noſe ful ſemely
And frenche ſhe ſpake ful fetously
After the ſchole of Stratforde at bowe
For frenche of parys was to her vnknowe
At meate was ſhe wel ytaught withal
She let no morſel fro her lyppes fal
Ne wette her fyngers in her ſauce depe
Wel coude ſhe carye a morſel and wel kepe
That no drop ne fel vpon her breſt
In curtefy was ſet ful moche her leſt
Her ouerlyp wyped ſhe ſo clene
That in her cup was no ferthynge ſene
Of grece, whan ſhe dronken hath her draught

Fulsemely after her mete she raught
And sykerly she was of great disporte
And ful plesaunt, and amyable of porte
And payned her to counterfete chere
Of court, and to be stately of manere
And to ben holden digne of reuerence
But for to speke of her conscience
She was so charytable and so pytous
She wolde wepe yf that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, yf it were deed or bledde
Of smale houndes had she that she fedde
With roste flesshe, mylke, or wastel breed
But sore wepte she yf any of hem were deed
Or yf men smote hem with a yarde smarte
And al was conscience and tender herte
Ful semely her wympple pynched was
Her nose tretys, her eyen gray as glas
Her mouth smale, and therto softe and reed
But sykerly she had a fayre forehed
It was almost a span brode I trowe
For hardely she was not vndergrowe
Ful fetys was her cloke as I was ware
Of smale coral about her arme she bare
A payre of bedes, gauded al with grene
And theron honge a brooche of golde ful shene
On which ther was first write a crowned. A
And after that Amor vincit omnia
Another Nonne with her had she
That was her chapelyn, and preestes thre

¶ The Monke. v.

A Monke there was, faire for the maystry
An outryder, that loued venery
A manly man, to ben an abbot able
Ful many a deynte horse had he in stable
And when he rode men myght his bridel here
Gyngelyng in a whistlyng wynde as clere
And eke as loude as doth the chapel bel
There as this lorde was keper of the cel
The rule of saint Maure and of saint Benet
Bycause it was olde and somdele streyt
This ylke Monke let olde thynges pace
And held after the newe worlde the space
He yaf not of the texte a pulled hen
That saith, that hunters be not holy men
Ne that a monke whan he is recchelees
Is lykened to a fysshe that is waterlees
This is to say, a Monke out of his cloystre
This ylke text held he not worthe an oystre
And I say his opinion was good
What sholde he study, and make himselfe wood
Upon a boke alway in cloyster to powre
Or swynke with his handes, or labowre
As Austyn byd, howe shal the worlde be serued
Let Austyn haue his swinke to him reserued
Therfore he was a pryckeflour a ryght
Grehoundes he had as swift as foule of flyght
Of pryckynge and of hunynge for the hare
Was al his lust, for no coste wolde he spare
I sawe hys sleues purfled at the hande
With grys, and that the fynest in a lande
And for to faste hys hoode vnder the chynne
He had of golde wrought a curious pynne
A loue knot in the greatre ende there was
His heed was balde, and shone as any glas
And eke his face, as he had ben anoynte
He was a lorde ful fat and in good poynte
His eyen stepe, and rollynge in his heed
That stemed as a furnays of a leed
Hys bootes soupple, his hors in great estate
Now certaynly he was a fayre prelate
He was not pale as a forpyned ghost
A fatte swan loued he best of any roost
Hys palfray was broune as is a bery

¶ The Frere. vi.

A Frere there was a wanton and a merry
A lymytour, a ful solempne man
In all the ordres foure is none that can
So moche of dalyaunce and fayre langage
He had made ful many a marryage
Of yonge women at his owene cost
Vnto his order he was a noble post
Ful wel beloued, and fayn vyker was he
With frankeleyns ouer al in his countre
And with worthy women of the toun
For he had power of confessyoun
As he sayd hym selfe, more than a curate
For of his order he was licenciate
Ful swetely herde he confessyon
And plesaunt was his absolucyon
He was an esy man to gyue penaunce
There as he wyst to haue a good pytaunce
For vnto a poore ordre for to gyue
Is signe that a man is wel yshryue
For yf he gaue, he dorst make auaunt
He wyst that a man was repentaunt
For many a man is so harde of herte
That he may not wepe though him smerte
Therfore in stede of weepynge and prayeres
Men moste gyue syluer to the poore freres
His typpet was ay fassed ful of knyues
And pynnes, for to gyue fayre wyues
And certaynly he had a merry note

Wel coude he synge and playen on a rote
Of yeddyng he bare vtterly the prize
His necke was whyte as the flour delyce
Therto stronge he was as a champioun
And knewe the tauerns wel in euery toun
And euery hostelier and tapstere
Bet than a lazer or a beggere
For vnto suche a worthy man as he
Accordeth naught, as by his faculte
To haue with lazers suche acquayntaunce
It is not honest, it may not auaunce
For to dele with suche poraylle
But al with riche, and sellers of vitayle
And ouer al there as profyte shulde arise
Curteys he was, and lowly of seruyce
There nas no man no where so vertuous
He was the best begger in hys hous
And gaue a certayne ferme for the graunte
None of his brethren came in his haunte
For though a wydowe had but a shoo
(So plesaunt was his In principio)
Yet wolde he haue a farthyng or he went
His purchase was better than his rent
And rage he couth as it were a whelpe
In louedayes there coude he mykel helpe
For there he was nat lyke a cloysterere
With a threde bare cope, as a poore frere
But he was lyke a maystre or a pope
Of double worstede was his semy cope
So rounded was as a bel out of presse
Somwhat he lyspyd for his wantonnesse
To make his Englysshe swete vpon hys tong
And in harpyng, whan he had song
His eyen twinkeled in his heed a tyght
As doue the sterres in a frosty nyght
This worthy frere was called Huberde.

The Marchaunt. vii.

A Marchaũt was there with a longe berde
In motley, on high on his horse he sat
Vpon his heed a Flaunders beuer hat
His botes clasped fayre and fetously
His reasons he spake ful solempnely
Shewyng alway the encrease of his winning
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Betwixe Middelborough and Orewel
Wel coude he in eschaunge sel
This worthy man ful wel his wit byset
There wist no wight that he was in det
So stately was he of his gouernaunce
With his bargeyns, and with his chenisaũce
Forsothe he was a worthy man withal
But sothly to sayn, I not what men him cal.

The clerke of Oxenforde viii.

A Clerke there was of Oxenforde also
That vnto logike had longe ygo
As leane was his hors as a rake
And he was nothing fat I vndertake
But lokede holowe, and therto soberly
Ful thredbare was his ouer courtepy
For he had yet geten him no benefice
Ne was nought worldly to haue none office
For him was leuer to haue at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes, cladde with blacke or reed
Of Aristotle, and of his philosophye
Than robes ryche, or fyddel, or gay sautrye
But al be that he was of a philosophye
Yet had he but lytel golde in cofre
But al that he might of hys frendes hente
On bokes and on lerning he it spent
And bisily gan for the soules pray
Of hem that helpen him to scholay
Of study took he moste cure and hede
Not a worde spake more than nede
And that was sayd in fourme and reuerence
And shert and quicke, and of hye sentence
Sownyng in moral vertue was his speche
And gladly wolde lerne, and gladly teche.

The sergiant at lawe. ix.

A Sergiant of lawe, wary and wyse
That often had ben at the parvyse
That was also ful ryche of excellence
Discrete he was, and of great reuerence
He semed such, his wordes were so wyse
Justyce he was ful often in assyse
By patent, and by playne commyssioun
For his science, and his hye renoun
Of fees and robes had he many one
So great a purchasour was no where none
Al was fee simple to hym in effecte
His purchasing might not be to him suspecte
No where so bisy a man as he there nas
And yet he semed bisier than he was
In termes had he case and domes al
That from the tyme of kyng Wyllam was fal
Therto he coude endite, and make a thyng
There coude no wight pinche at his writing
And euery statute coude he playne by rote
He rode but homely in a medley cote
Girt with a seynt of silke, with barres smale
Of his array, tel I no longer tale.

The

¶ The Frankeleyn. i.

A frankeleyn there was in his companye
Whyte was his herde, as is the deyse
And of his complexion he was sanguyne
Wel loued he by the morow a soppe in wyne
To lyuen in delyte was euer hys wonne
For he was Epycures owine sonne
That helde opinion, that playne delyte
Was very felycite perfyte
An housholder, and that a great was he
Seynt Julyan he was in his countre
His bred, hys ale, was alway after one
A better viended man was no where none
Without bake meate was neuer hys house
Of fyshe and flesshe, and that so plenteouse
It snewed in hys house of meate and drinke
Of al deyntes that men coude thynke
After the sondry seasons of the yere
So chaunged he his meate and his suppere
Ful many a fatte Partrych had he in mewe
And many a breme, and many a luce in stewe
Woo was his cooke, but hys sauce were
Poynaunte and sharpe, and redy al hys gere
His table dormaunt in his hal alway
Stode redy couered al the longe day
At sessyons there was he lorde and syre
Ful often tyme he was knyght of the shyre
An anelace and gypsere al of sylke
Hyng at his gyrdle, white as morowe milke
A sheryfe had he ben, and a countour
Was nowhere suche a worthy vauasour.

¶ The Haberdasher. ii.

An Haberdasher there was and a carpenter
A webbe, a dyer, and a tapyser
Al they were yclothed in o lyuere
Of a solempne and a great fraternyte
Ful freshe and newe her geare ypiked was
Her knyues ychaped were not with bras
But al with syluer wrought ful clene and wele
Her gyrdeles and her pouches euery dele
Wel semed euerych of hem a fayre burgeys
To sytten at a yelde hal, on the hye deys
Euerych for the wysdome that he can
Was shapelych for to ben an alderman
For catayle had they ryght ynoughe and rent
And eke her wyues wolde it wel assent
And elles certayne they were to blame
It is ful fayre to ben ycleped madame
And goon to vigilies al before
And haue a mantel royallych yborne.

¶ The Coke. iii.

A Coke they had with hem for the nones
To boyle the chykens and the mary bones
And poudre merchaunt, tarte, and galingale
Wel coude he know a draught of London ale
He couth roste, sethe, boyle, and frye
Make mortreys, and wel bake a pye
But great harme was it, as it thought me
That on hys shynne a mormal had he
And blanke manger made he with the best.

¶ The Shypman. iiii.

A Shipman was ther, wonyng fer by weste
For aught I wot, he was of Dertemouth
He rode vpon a rouncy, as he couthe
In a gowne of faldyng to the knee
A dagger hangyng by a lace had he
Aboute his necke, vnder his arme downe
The hot somer had made his hew al brownne
And certaynly he was a good felawe
Ful many a draught of wine had he drawe
Fro Burdeux ward, while the chapman slepe
Of nyce conscience took he no kepe
If that he faught, and had the hygher honde
By water he sent hem home to euery londe
But of his craft, to reken wel his tydes
His stremes and his daungers hym besydes
His herbergh, his moone, and his lodemenage
Ther was none suche from hull to Cartage
Hardy he was, and wyse to vndertake
With many a tempest had his berde be shake
He knewe al the hauens as they were
Fro Scotlande to the Cape de fynysterre
And euery creke in Brytayne and in Spayne
His barge was called the Maudelayne

¶ The doctour of phisike. iiii.

With hs there was a doctour of phisyke
In al this worlde ne was ther none hym lyke
To speke of phisike and of surgerye
For he was grounded in astronomye
He kepte his pacyente a ful great del
In houres, by hys magyke naturel
Wel couthe he fortune the ascendent
Of his ymage for hys pacient
He knewe the cause of euery maladye
Were it of colde, hete, moyste, or drye
And where engendred and of what humour
He was a very parfyte practysour
The cause yknowe, and of hys harme the rote
Anone he gaue to the syke man his bote

Ful

Ful redy had he his apoticaries
To sende hym drugges and his lectuaries
For eche of hem made other for to wynne
Her frendshyp nas not newe to begynne
Wel knewe he the olde Esculapius
And Dioscorides, and eke Rufus
Olde Hippocrates, Haly, and eke Galien
Serapion, Rasis, and also Auicen
Auerroys, Damascene, and Constantyn
Bernarde, Gatisden, and Gilbertyn
Of his diete mesurable was he
For it was of no superfluite
But of grete nourishyng, and digestible
His study was but lytel on the Bible
In sanguyne and in perse he clad was al
Lyned with Taffata, and with sendal
And yet he was but easy of dispence
He kepte that he wan in pestilence
For golde in phisike is a cordial
Therfore he lovede golde in special.

The wyfe of Bathe. xv.

A Good wyf was there besyde Bathe
But she was somdel defe, and that was scathe
Of clothe making she had such an haunt
She passed hem of Ypre, and of Gaunt
In al the parysshe wyf ne was there none
That to the offrynge before her shulde gone
And if there did, certayne she was wroth
That she was al out of charyte
Her coverchefs ful fyne were of grounde
I dorste swere they weyden ten pounde
That on a Sonday were upon her heed
Her hosen were of fyne scarlet reed
Ful streyte ystreyned, and shoes ful newe
Bolde was her face, and feir and reed of hewe
She was a worthy woman al her lyve
Housbandes at the chirche dore had she fyve
Withouten other company in youthe
But therof nedeth not to speke as nouthe
And thryse had she ben at Jerusalem
She had passed many a straunge streme
At Rome had she ben, and at Boloyne
In Galys at Seynt James, and at Coloyne
She coude moche of wandrynge by the way
Gat tothed was she sothly for to say
Upon an ambler esily she sat
Ywympled wel, and on her heed an hat
As brode as is a bokeler or a targe
A foote mantel aboute her hyppes large
And on her fete a payre of spurres sharpe
In felyshyp wel coude she laughe and carpe
Of remedies of love she coude parchaunce
For she coude of that arte the olde daunce

The Persone. xvi.

A Good man there was of religioun
And was a poore Persone of a toun
But rich he was of holy thought & werk
He was also a lerned man, and a clerke
That Christes gospel trewly wolde preche
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche
Benygne he was and wonder diligent
And in adversyte ful patient
And such he was proved often sythes
Ful lothe were him to curse for his tythes
But rather wolde he yeven out of doute
Unto his poore parisshens aboute
Of his offrynge and of his substaunce
He coude in lytel thing have suffisaunce
Wyde was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder
But he ne lefte nat therfor for reyne ne thonder
In sickenesse nor in mischefe for to vysyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte
Upon his fete, and in his hande a staf
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf
That first he wroughte, and after wrote he taught
Out of the gospel he the wordes caught
And this figure he added eke therto
That yf golde rust, what shulde yron do
For yf a prest be foule, on whom we trust
No wonder is a lewde man to rust
And shame it is, if a prest take keepe
To see a dyrten shepherde, and a clene sheepe
Wel ought a prest ensample for to yeve
By his clennesse, how his sheepe shulde lyve
He sette not his benefice to hyre
And lefte his sheepe accombred in the myre
And ranne to London to sayne Poules
To seken him a chaunterye for soules
Or with a brotherhede be rolde withholde
But dwelte at home, and kepte wel his folde
So that the wolfe ne made it not myscarye
He was a shepherde, and nat a mercenarye
And though he holy were and vertuous
He was not to synful men dispytous
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne
But in his techyng discrete and benigne
To drawen folke to heven with fayrenesse
By good ensample, this was his busynesse
But yf it were any person obstinate
What so he were of hye or lowe estate
Him wolde he snybbe sharply for the nones
A better preest I trowe no where non is

He wayted after no pompe ne reuerence
Ne made hym no spyced conscience
But Christes lore, and his apostles twelue
He taught, but first he folowed it himselue.

The Plowman xvii.

With him there was a Plowman
his brother
That had ylad of donge many a fother
A trewe swynker and a good was he
Lyuyng in peace, and parfyte charyte
God loued he best with al his herte
At tymes, thoughe him gamed or smerte
And than his neighbours right as himselfe
He wolde thresshe and therto dyke and delfe
For Christes sake, for euery poore wyght
Without hyre, if it lay in his myght
His tythes payde he full fayre and wel
Both of his proper swynke, and of his catel
In a tabarde he rode, vpon a mare
There was also a Reue, and a Millare
A Somnour, and a Pardoner also
A Manciple, and my selfe, there was no mo.

The Myller. xviii.

The miller was a stout carle for ꝑ nones
Ful big he was of braune, and eke of bones
That proued wel, for ouer al there he came
At wrastling he wolde haue away the ram
He was short shouldered, a thicke gnarre
There nas no doore, but he wolde heue ꝑ barre
Of brake it, or renne with his heed
His beerde as any sowe or fore was reed
And therto brode, as it were a spade
Upon the coppe right of his nose he bade
A werte, and therin stode a tufte of heres
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres
His nosethirles blacke were and wyde
A sworde and a bucheler bare he by his syde
His mouthe as great was as a furnays
He was a janglere and a gotebordere
And that was most of synne and of harlotryes
Wel couthe he stele corne, and tolde it thryse
And yet he had a thombe of golde parde
A whyte cote and a blewe hode wered he
A baggepype wel couthe he blowe and sowne
And therwithal he brought vs out of towne.

The Manciple. xix.

A Gentle Manciple there was of ꝑ temple
Of whom al caterers might take ensample
For to ben wyse, in byeng of vitayle
For whether he payde, or took by taile
Algate he wayted so in his achate
That he was aye before, in good estate
Now is not that of god a ful fayre grace
That such a lewde mans wit shal pace
The wisedome of an heape of lerned men
Of maysters had he mo than thryse ten
That were of lawe expert, and curyous
Of whiche there was a dosen in that house
Worthy to ben stewardes of rent and lande
Of any lorde that is in Englande
To make him lyue by his proper good
In honour detteles, but if he were wood
Or liue as scantly as hym lyste desyre
And able to helpen al a shyre
In any case that might befalle or happe
And yet this Manciple set al her cappe

The Reue. xx.

The Reue was a sclender colerike man
His berd was shaue as nye as ever he can
His heer was by his eres rounde yshorn
His top was docked lyke a preest before
Ful longe were his legges and ful lene
Ylyke a staffe, there was no calfe ysene
Wel couth he kepe a garner and a bynne
There was non auditour could on him wynne
Wel wyst he by the drought, and by the reyne
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyne
His lordes sheep, his neet, and his dayerie
His swyne, his horse, his store, and his pultrie
Were wholy in this Reues gouernyng
And by his couenaunt yaue he rekenyng
Sith his lorde was twenty yere of age
There coude no man bringe him in arrerage
There nas baylif, herde, ne other hyne
That he ne knewe his sleyght and his couyne
They were adradde of him as of the deethe
His dwellyng was ful fayre vpon a heethe
With grene trees shadowed was his place
He coude better than his lorde purchace
Ful riche he was astored prively
His lorde he coude wel plese subtilly
To yeue and lene him of his owne good
And haue a thanke, and yet a cote and a hood
In youth he had lerned a good mystere
He was a wel good wryght, a carpenere
This Reue sate vpon a right good stot
That was al pomel grey, and hight Scot

A long.

A longe surcote of perce vpon he hade
And vp his syde he bare a rusty blade
Of Norfolke was this Reue, of which I tel
Besyde a towne, men clepen it Baldeswel
Tucked he was, as is a frere aboute
And ever he rode hyndereſt of the route

The ¶ The Sompnour. xxi.

A Sompnour was there with vs in ỳ place
That had a fire red cherubyns face
For sauſeme he was, with eyen narowe
As hote he was, and lecherous as a sparowe
With scaled browes blacke, and pylled berde
Of his vysage children were sore aferde
There nas quicksilver, lytarge, ne brymstone
Borace, ceruse, ne oyle of tartre none
Ne ointment that wolde clense or byte
That hym might helpe of his whelkes white
Ne of his knobbes sitting on his chekes
Wel loued he garlyke, onyons, and eke lekes
And for to drinke strong wyne red as blood
Then wolde he speke & crie as he were wood
And whan he had wel ydronke the wyne
Than wolde he speke no worde but latyne
A fewe termes had he, two or three
That he had lerned out of some degre
No wonder is, he herde it al the daye
And ye knowen wel eke howe that a iaye
Can clepe watte, as wel as can the pope
But whoso couthe in other thyng him grope
Than had he spent al hys philosophye
(Aquestio quid iuris) wolde he crye
He was a gentel harlot and a kynde
A better felowe shulde a man nat fynde
He wolde suffre for a quarte of wyne
A good felowe to haue his concubyne
A twelue monthe, and excuse him at the ful
Ful prively eke a fynche couthe he pul
And if he fonde o where a good felawe
He wolde teche hym to haue none awe
In suche case, of the archedekyns curse
But if mans soule were in his purse
For in his purse he shulde ypunyshed be
Purse is the archedekyns hel, sayd he
But wel I wotte he lyed right in dede
Of curſyng ought eche synful man drede
For curſyng wol slee, right as assoylyng saueth
And also ware him of a Significauit
In daunger had he at hys owne gyse
The yonge gyrles of the diocyse
And knewe her counsayle, and was of her reed
A garlonde had he set vpon hys heed
As great as it were for an alestake
A buckeler had he maked him of a cake

¶ The Pardoner. xxii.

With him there rode a gentle Pardoner
Of Rouncyual, his frend & his compere
That streyght was come fro ỳ court of Rome
Ful loude sóg he, com hyder loue tome (Rome
This Sompnour bare him a styffe burdon
Was neuer trompe of halfe so great a soun
This Pardoner had heer as yelow as wex
But smoth it hynge, as doth a stricke of flex
By ounces hynge his lockes that he had
And therwith he hys sholders ouerspradd
But thynne it lay by culpons one and one
But hode for iolyte weared he none
For it was trussed vp in his walet
Him thought he rode al of the newe iet
Dischevyld saue his cappe he rode al bare
Suche glarying eyen had he as an hare
A vernacle had he sowed vpon his cappe
His wallet before him in his lappe
Brette ful of pardó come from Rome al hote
A voyce he had as smale as hath a gote
No berde had he, ne neuer shulde haue
As smothe it was as it were ne we shaue
I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare
But of his craft fro Berwyke vnto Ware
Ne was ther such another pardonere
For in his male had he a pylowe bere
Which as he sayd, was our ladyes veyle
He sayd he had a gobbet of the seyle
That saynt Peter had whan that he went
Upon the see tyl Jesu Christ him hent
He had a crosse of latoun ful of stones
And in a glasse he had pygges bones
But with these relykes whan that he fonde
A poore person dwellyng vpon londe
Upon a day he gate hym more money
Than that person gate in monethes twey
And thus with fayned flatterying and iapes
He made the person and the people his apes
But trewly to tellen at the laste
He was in the churche a noble ecclesiaste
Wel couthe he rede a lesson or a storye
But alderbest he sange an offertorye
For wel he wyst, whan that songe was songe
He must preche, and wel afyle hys tonge
To wynne syluer as he wel coude
Therfore he songe so merely and loude.

Nowe

Now haue I tolde you sothly in a clause
The state, the aray, eche nobre, & eke the cause
Why that assembled was this company
In sothwerke at this gentel hostelry
That highte the Tabarde fast by the Belle
But nowe is tyme to you for to telle
Howe that we baren vs that ylke nyght
Whan we weren in that hostry a lyght
And after wol I tel of our vyage
And al the remnaunt of our pylgrymage
But firste I pray you of your curtesy
That ye ne arette it nat my folly
Though that I playnly speke in this matere
To tellen you her wordes and eke her chere
Ne though I speke her wordes properly
For this ye knowen as wel as I
Who shal tellen a tale after a manne
He mote reherse as ny as euer he canne
Euerych worde, if it be in hys charge
All speke he neuer so rudely ne large
Or els he mote tellen hys tale vntrewe
Or feyne thynges, or fynde wordes newe
He may not spare altho he were his brother
He mote as wel say o worde as another
Crist spake him selfe ful brode in holy writ
And wel I wotte no vyllany is it
Eke Plato sayth, who so can hym rede
The wordes mote ben cosyn to the dede
Also I pray you forgeue it me
Al haue I nat set folke in her degre
Here in this tale as they shulde stande
My witte is shorte ye may wel vnderstande.

Great chere made our host vs euerychon
And to the supper sette he vs anon
And serued vs with vitayle at the best
Strong was the wyne, & wel dronke vs lest
A semely man our host was with al
For to ben a marshal in a lordes hal
A large man he was with eyen stepe
A fayrer burgeys is there none in Chepe
Bolde of his speche, wyse and wel ytaught
And of manhode him lacked right naught
Eke therto he was a right mery man
And after supper playen he began
And spake of myrthe amonge other thynges
Whan that we had made our rekenynges
And sayd thus, nowe lordynges trewly
Ye ben to me welcome right hertely
For by my trouth if I shulde not lye
I sawe nat this yere so mery a compayne
Atones, in this herbrowe as is nowe
Fayn wolde I don you myrth & I wist how
And of a myrth I am right nowe bethought
To don you ease, and it shal coste nought
Ye gone to Canterbury god mote you spede
The blysful martyr quite you your mede
And wel I wot as ye gone by the way
Ye shapen you to talken and to play
For trewly comforte ne myrth is there none
To ryden by the way as dombe as a stone
And therfore wolde I maken you disporte
As I sayd erst, and done you some comforte
And if you lyketh al by one assent
For to stonden at my iugement
And for to worchen as I shal you say
To morowe whan we ryden on the way
Nowe by my fathers soule that is deed
But ye be mery I wol giue you my heed
Holde vp your handes without more speche
Our counsayle was not longe for to seche
Vs thought it was not worth to make it wise
And graunted him without more auyse
And bad him say his verdit as him lest
Lordinges (qd he) nowe herkeneth for ý best
But take it nat I pray you in disdayne
This is the poynt to speke it plat and playne
That eche of you to shorte with others way
In this viage, shal tel tales tway
To Canterbury warde I meane it so
And homwardes he shall tel tales other two
Of auentures whilom that han befal
And whiche of you that bereth him best of al
That is to sayne, that tellen in this case
Tales of best sentence and most solace
Shal haue a supper at oure aller cost
Here in this place sytting by this post
Whan that we comen ayen from Canterbury
And for to make you the more mery
I wil my seluen goodly with you ryde
Right at myne owne cost and be your gyde
And who that wol my iugement withsay
Shal pay al that we spende by the way
And if ye vouchsafe that it be so
Tel me anone without wordes mo
And I wol erly shape me therfore
This thing was graunted & our othes swore
With glad hert, and prayden him also
That he wolde vouchsafe for to do so
And that he wolde ben our gouernour
And of our tales iuge and reporter our
And set a supper at a certayne prise
And we wollen ben ruled at his deuise
In hye and lowe, and thus by one assent
We ben accorded to the iugement
And therupon the wyne was fette anon

We

Were dronken, and to reste wente fyne and
Withouten any lenger taryeng
Amorowe when they gan to sprynge
Up roste our host, and was our alder cocke
And gadered vs al in a flocke
And forth we ryden a lytel more than paas
Vnto the watering of saynt Thomas
And there our host began his horse arest
And sayd: lordes herkeneth yf you lest
Ye wote your forwarde, and I it recorde
Yf ryght songe and morowe songe accorde
Let se nowe who shal telle the first tale
As euer I moote drynke wyne or ale
Who so is rebel to my iugement
Shal pave for al that by the way is spent
Nowe draweth cut or that ye farther twynne
The which that hath the shortest shal begynne.

Sir knyght (q̄ he) my mayster & my lorde
Nowe shal it be, for that is myn accorde
Cometh nere, q̄ he, my lady prioresse
And ye sir clerke, let be your shamefastnesse
Ne studieth not, lay hande therto euery man
Anone to drawe euery wight began
And shortly for to tellen as it was
Were it by auenture, or by shorter cvas
The sothe is this, the cutte fyl to the knyght
Of whiche ful blyth & glad was euery wight
And telle he must his tale as it was reason
By forwarde, and by composicion
As ye han herde, what nedeth wordes mo
And whan this good man saw that it was so
As he that wyse was and obedyent
To kepen his forwarde by his fre assent
He sayd, sythen I shal begynne the game
What welcome cutte a goddes name
Now let vs ryde, and herkeneth what I say
And with ȳ worde we ryden forth our way
And he began with right a merry chere
His tale anone, right as ye shal here.

Thus endeth the prologues of the Canterbury tales, and here folowerth the knyghtes tale.

Myrlom, as olde stories tellen vs
There was a duke ꝑ hight Theseus
Of Athenes he was lorde and gouernour
And in his tyme suche a conquerour
That greatter was non vnder the son
Full many a riche countrey had he won
What with his wisdome, and his chevalry
He conquered all the regne of Femmy
That whilom was icleped Cythea
And wedded the queene Ipolita
And brought her home with him, in to his cõtre
With mychell glory and solempnyte
And eke her yonge suster Emely.
And thus with victory and melody
Let I this worthy duke to Athenes ryde
And all his host, in armes hym besyde.
And certes, if it were to longe to here
I wolde have told fully the manere
How wonnen was the regne of Femmy
By Theseus, and by his chevalry
And of the grete batayle for the nones
Betwene Athenes and Amasones
And how besiged was Ipolita
The vonge hardy queene of Cythea
And of the feest, ꝑ was at her weddyng
And of the tempest at her home cõmyng
But al ꝑ thing, I mote as now forbere
I have god wotte, a large feste to bere
And wekes ben the ores in the plowe
The remenant of my tale is longe nowe
I wyll nat letten eke, non of this rout
Let every felowe telle his tale about
And let se nowe, who shall the supper wyn
And there I lefte, I wyll agayne begyn.
This duke, of whom I make mencyoune
Whan he was come, almost to the towne
In all his wele and his moste pride
He was ware, as he caste his eye aside
Where that there kneled in the highe way
A company of ladys, tuey and tuey
Eche after other, clad in clothes blacke
But suche a cry, and suche a wo they make
That in this worlde, nys creature lyvynge
That euer herde suche a waymentynge
And of this cry, they nolde neuer stenten
Tyll they the regnes of his bridel henten
What folke be ye, ꝑ at myn home comyng
Perturben so my feest with cryeng
Quod Theseus. Have ye so great envy
Of myne honour, that thus complayne, and crye
Or who hath you myswrought, or offended
Telleth me, if it may be amended
And why that ye be clothed thus in blacke
The oldest lady of them al spake
What han ye had sorowe ye beth to blame
That it was ruthe for to se and herke
She sayd lorde, to whom fortune hath yeue
Victory, and as a conquerour to lyve
Nought greveth vs your glory and honour
But we beseke you of mercy and socour.
And have mercy on our wo and distresse
Some drope of pyte, through thy gentylesse
Upon vs wretched wymmen, let thou fall
For certes lorde, there nys none of vs all
That she ne hath be a duchesse or a queene
Nowe be we caytyves, as it is well seene
Thanked be fortune, and her falsse whele
That non estate assureth for to be wele.
Nowe certes lord, to abyde your presence
Here in this temple of the goddesse Clemence
We have be wayting all this fourtenyght

helpe vs lorde, sythe it lyeth in thy myghte.

Wo wretche, that wepe and wayle thus
Whylom wife to kyng Campaneus
That starfe at Thebes, cursed be ỳ day
And all we that ben in this aray
And maken all this lamentacyon
We losten all oure husbondes at that town
Whyle that the siege there aboute laye
And yet the olde Creon (welawaye)
That lorde is nowe of Thebes cite
Fulfylled of yre and of iniquite
He for dispyte, and for his tyranny
To done the dede bodyes vylany
Of all our lordes, whiche that ben slawe
Hath all the bodyes on an heape ydrawe
And wyll nat suffre hem, by none assent
Neyther to be buryed, ne to be brent
But maketh houndes to eate hem in dispyte
And vp that worde, without more respite
They fallen grouely, and crien pitously
Have on vs wretched wymen some mercy
And let our sorowe synke in thine hert.
This gentle duke downe fro his horse stert
With hert pytous, whan he herde hem speke
Hym thought that his hert wolde breke
Whan he sawe hem so pytous and so mate
That whylom were of so great astate
And in his armes, he hem all vp hent
And hem comforted in full good entent
And swore his othe, as he was true knyght
He wolde don so ferforthly his myght
Vpon the tyrante Creon hem to wreake
That all the people of Grece shulde speake
Howe Creon was of Theseus yserued
As he that had his deth full well deserued
And ryght anon withouten more abode
His baner he displayed, and forth rode
To Thebes warde, and al his hoost beside
No nere Athenes nolde he go ne ryde
Ne take his ease fully halfe a day
But onward on his way that nyght he laye
And sent anone Ipolita the quene
And Emely her yonge suster shene
Vnto the towne of Athenes to dwell
And forth he rydeth, ther nys no more to tel

The red statu of Mars vp spere and targe
So shyneth in his white baner large
That al the feldes glyttren vp and doun
And by his baner, borne is his penon
Of golde ful riche, in which there was ybete
The mynotaure, that he wan in Crete
Thus rydeth this duke, this conqueroure
And in his hoste of chyualry the flour
Tyll that he came to Thebes, and alyght
Faire in a felde, ther as he thought to fyght
But shortly for to speken of this thyng
With Creon, whiche was of Thebes kyng
He faught, and slewe him manly as a knyght
In playne batayle, and put his folke to flyght
And at a saute he wan the cyte after
And rente adowne wall, sparre, and rafter
And to the ladyes he restored agayn
The bodyes of her husbandes ỳ were slayn
To done obsequies, as tho was the gyse
But it were all to longe for to deuyse
The great clamour, and the weymentyng
That the ladyes made at the brennyng
Of the bodyes, and the great honour
That Theseus, the noble conquerour
Doth to ỳ ladies, whan they from him wente
But shortly to tellen is myne entent
Whan ỳ this worthy duke, this Theseus
Hath Creon slayne, and wan Thebes thus
Stylle in the felde he toke all nyght his rest
And dyd with all the countre as him lest
To ransake in the taas of bodyes dede
(Hem for to stripe of harneys and of wede)
The pyllours dyd her busynesse and cure
After the batayle and the discomfyture
And so befel, that in the taas they founde
Through gyrt with many a grenous wounde
Two yonge knyghtes lyeng by and by
Both in armes faire, wrought full richely
Of whiche two, Arcyte hyght that one
And that other hight Palamon
Not fully quycke, ne fully deed they were
But by her cote armours, and by her gere
The heraudes knewe hem best in specyall
As tho that weren of the blood ryall
Of Thebes, and of sustren two yborne
Out of the taas ỳ pyllours hath hem torne
And han hem caryed softe in to the tent
Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sent
To Athenes, to dwellen there in prison
Perpetuell, he nolde hem not raunson
And whan this worthy duke had thus ido
He toke his hoost, and home he gothe anon
With laurer crowned, as a conqueroure
And there he lyueth in ioye and honoure
Terme of his lyfe, what nedeth wordes mo
And in a towre, in angwyshe and in wo
Dwelleth Palamon, and his felowe Arcyte
For euermore, there may no gold hem quite

Thus passeth yere by yere, & day by day
Tyll it fell ones in a morowe of May
That Emely, that fayrer was to sene
Than is the lylly, vpon the walke grene
And fresher than May, with floures newe
For with the rose colour strofe her hewe
I not whiche was the fayrer of hem two
Er it was day, as was her won to do
She was aryse, and all redy dyght
For May will haue no slogardy a nyght
The season pricketh euery gentell herte
And maketh it out of her slepe sterte
And sayth aryse, and do May obseruaunce
This maketh Emely to haue remembraūce
To done honour to May, and for to ryse
I clothed was she freshe for to deuyse
Her yelowe heare was bryded in a tresse
Behynde her backe, a yerde longe I gesse
And in the gardyn at sonne vprist
She walketh vp and downe as her lyst
She gathereth floures, party whyte & reed
To make a subtell garlande for her heed
And as an angell, heuenly she song
The great tour, that was so thycke & strong
Whiche of the castell was the chefe dungeon
Wherin the knyghtes were in prison
Of whiche I tolde you, and tell shall
Was euyn ioynaunt to the garden wall
There as this Emely had her playeng
Bright was the son, & clere the morwyng
And Palamon, this wofull prisoner
As was his won, by leaue of his gayler
Vvas risen, & romed in a chambre on hyghe
In whiche he all the noble cyte syghe
And eke the gardyn, full of braunches grene
There as this freshe Emely the shene
Vvas in her walke, & romed vp and doun.
This sorowfull prisoner, this Palamon
Gothe in his chambre romyng to and fro
And to hym selfe complaynyng of his wo
That he was borne, full ofte sayd alas
And so befell by auenture or caas
That through a window thick of many a bar
Of yren great, & square as any spar
He cast his eyen vpon Emelia
And therwith he blent and cryed, ha.
As thoughe he stongen were to the herte.
And with that crye Arcite anon vp sterte
And sayd, cosyn myne, what eyleth the
That art so pale and deedly for to se
Why cryest thou who hath do the offence
For goddes loue, take all in pacience
Our prison, for it maye none other be
Fortune hath yeuen vs this aduersite
Some wicked aspect or disposicion
Of Saturne, by some constellacyon
Hath yeuen vs this, although we had it sworn
So stode the heuen, when þ we were born
Vve moste endure this is short and playn.
This Palamon answerde, & sayde agayn:
Cosyn forsoth, of this opinion
Thou hast a vayne ymagynacion
This prison caused me not to crye
But I was hurt right now through myn ye
Into myne hert, that will my bane be
The fayrnesse of a lady that I se
Yonde in the gardyn, romyng to and fro
As cause of all my crying and wo
I not wher she be woman or goddesse
But Venus it is, soothly as I gesse
And therwith all on knees down he fyll
And sayd: Venus, if it be thy wyll
You in this garden, thus to transfygure
Before me, sorowfull wretched creature
Out of this prison helpe that we may scape
And if our desteny be so shape
By eternc worde, to dyen in prison
Of our lynage haue some compassion
That is so lowe ybrought by tyranny.
And with that worde Arcite gan espy
Vvhere as the lady romed to and fro
And with that sight her bewte hurt him so
That if that Palamon were wounded sore
Arcite was hurt as moche as he, or more
And with a sygh he said pytously
The freshe beute sleeth me sodenly
Of her that rometh in yonder place
And but I haue her mercy and her grace
That I may seen her at the leste way
I nam but deed, there nys no more to say.

This Palamō, whā he these wordes herd
Dispytously he loked, and answerd:
Vvhether sayest thou this in ernest or in play
Nay quod Arcite, in ernest by my fay
God helpe me so, me lyst full yuell to play
This Palamō gan knit his browes twey
It were (quod he) to the no great honour
To be false, ne for to be traytour
To me, that am thy cosyn & thy brother
Isworne full depe, and eche of vs to other
That neuer for to dyen in the payne
Tyll that the deth departe vs twayne
Neyther of vs in loue to hynder other
Ne in none other case my leue brother
But that thou shuldest truly further me

In euery caſe, as I ſhulde further the
This was thyn othe, and myn alſo certayn
I wote it well, thou darſt it not withſayn
Thus art thou of my counſell out of doubte
And nowe thou wolderſt falſly ben aboute
To loue my lady, whom I loue and ſerue
And euer ſhall, tyll that my herte ſterue.
Now certes falſe Arcite thou ſhalte not ſo
I loued her firſt, and tolde the my wo
As to my counſell, & to my brother ſwoorne
To further me, as I haue tolde beforne
For whiche thou art ybounden, as a knyght
To helpen me, if it lye in thy myght
Or elſ arte thou falſe, I dare well ſaine.
This Arcite full proudly ſpake agayne.
Thou ſhalt (quod he) be rather falſe than I
And thou arte falſe I tellebe vtterly.
For paramour I loued her firſt or thou
What wilte ſayn, thou wiſt it nat or nowe
Whether ſhe be woman or goddeſſe
Thyne is affection of holyneſſe
And myne is loue, as to a creature
For whyche I tolde the myn auenture
As to my coſyn, and my brother ſwoorne.
Suppoſe that thou loueſt her byforne
Wiſt thou not well the olde clerkes ſawe
That, who ſhall gyue a louer any lawe
Loue is a greater lawe by my pan
Than may be yeuen to any erthly man
And therfore poſityfe lawe, and ſuche decre
Is broken all day for loue in eche degre
A man muſte nedes loue maugre his heed
He may nat flen it though he ſhuld be deed
All be ſhe mayde, wyfe, or wyfe
And eke it is not lykely all thy lyfe
To ſtonden in her grace, nomore ſhall I
For well thou woſt thy ſelfe verely
That thou and I be dampned to priſon
Perpetuell, vs gayneth no raunſon.
We ſtriuen, as dyd the houndes for the bone
That foughten al day, & yet her part was none
Ther came a cur, while they were ſo wroth
And bare away the bone fromm hem both
And therfore, at lyngeſt, coueyn my brother
Eche man for him ſelfe, there is none other
Loue if thou lyſt, for I loue and ay ſhall
And ſothly leue brother this is all
Here in this priſon muſte we endure
And euerych of vs take his auenture.
Great was the ſtrife betwix hem twey
If that I had leyſer for to ſey
But to theffect, it happed on a day
To telle it you ſhortly as I may.
A worthy duke that hyght Perithous.
That felowe was to duke Theſeus
Syth thylke day that they were children lyte
Was come to Athenes, his felowe to viſyte
And for to play, as he was wonte to do
For in this worlde he loued no man ſo
And he loued him as tenderly agayne
So well they loued, as olde bokes ſayne
That whan that one was deed, ſothly to tell
His felow went & ſought him down in hell
But of that ſtory lyſt me not to write.
Duke Perithous loued well Arcite
And had him knowe at Thebes yere by yere
And finally at requeſt and prayere
Of Perithous, without any raunſon
Duke Theſeus let him out of priſon
Freely to gon, whither him lyſt ouer all
In ſuche a gyſe, as I you tellen ſhall.
This was the forwarde, playnly to endyte
Betwixe duke Theſeus and him Arcite
That if ſo were, that Arcite were yfounde
Euer in his lyfe, by day, nyght or ſtounde
In any countre of this duke Theſeus
And he were caught it was acorded thus
That with a ſwerde he ſhuld leſe his heed
Ther was none other remedy ne reed
But taketh his leaue, & homward he ſpedde
Let him betware, his neche lyeth in wedde
A ſharpe ſpore ſtingeth no more Arcite
Than he that lyeth by the walle or dyke
He walweth, wayleth, & curſeth pitously
To ſlen him ſelfe he wayteth priuely
And ſayd, alas the day that I was borne
Now is my priſon worſe than beforne
Now is me ſhapen eternally to dwell
Nought in purgatory, but in hell
Alas that euer I knew Perithous
For els had I dwelt with Theſeus
Yfetered in his priſon euermo
Than had I ben in blyſſe, and nat in wo
Only the ſyght of her, whom that I ſerue
Though that I neuer her grace may deſerue
Wolde haue ſuffiſed ryght ynough for me
O dere coſyn Palamon (quod he)
Thine is the victory of this auenture
Full blyſſfully in priſon muſt thou endure
In priſon, May certes but in paradyſe
Wel hath fortune to the yeuen thyne dyſe
That haſt the ſyght of her, and I thabſence
For poſſible is, ſithens thou haſt her preſence
And arte a knyght, a worthy man & able
That by ſome cace, ſyn fortune is chaungeable
Thou mayſt ſomeyme to thy deſyre attayne
But

But I that am exiled, and baraynye
Of all grace, and in so great dispeyre
That ther nys water, erthe, fyre, ne eyre
Ne creature, that of hem maked is
That may me heale, or done comfort in thys
Wel ought I sterue in wanhope & distresse
Farwell my lyfe, my lust, & my gladnesse
Alas, why playnen men so in commune
Of purueyaunce of god, or of fortune
That yeueth hem full ofte in many agryse
Wel bette than hem selfe can deuyse
Some man desyreth to haue richesse
That cause is of her murdre or sykenesse
And some man wold out of his prison fayne
That in his house, is of his meyne slayne
Infinite harmes here in this matere
We wote not what thing we prayen here
We faren as he that dronke is as a mouse
A dronken man woten well, he hath an house
But he wot not, which the right way thyder
And to a dronken man the way is slyder
And certes in this worlde so faren we
We seken fast after felicite
But we go wronge full ofte truely
Thus may we say all, and namely I
That wende, and had a great opinion
That if I myght scape fro prison
Than had I ben in ioye and parfite hele
There nowe I am exiled fro my wele
Sith that I may not seen you Emely
I nam but dede, there nys no remedy.

Upon that other syde Palamon
Whan that he wist Arcite was gon
Such sorowe he maketh, that the great tour
Resowned of his yelling and clamour
The pure fetters on his shynes grete
Were of his bytter salte teares wete
Alas quod he Arcite cosyn myne
Of all our strife, god wot y fruite is thyne
Thou walkest nowe in Thebes at large
And of my wo, thou yeuest lytell charge
Thou mayst, sith y hast wysedom & manhede
Assemble all the folke of our kynrede
And make warre so sharpe in this countre
That by some auenture, or tretye
Thou mayst haue her to lady and to wyfe
For whom I must nedes lese my lyfe
For as by way of possibilite.
Sith thou art at thy large of prison free
And art a lorde, great is thyne auauntage
More than is myn, y sterue here in a rage
For I may wepe & waylle, whyles y lyue
With all the wo that prison may me yeue
And eke with payne, that loue yeueth me also
That doubleth all my torment and my wo

Therwith the fyre of ielousy up stert
Within his brest, and hent him by the hert
So wodely, that he lyke was to beholde
The bore tyrre, or the aspen leef and colde
Than said he. O cruell goddes, that gouerne
This worlde with your worde eterne
And writen in the table of Adamant
Your parliament and eterne graunt
What is mankynde more vnto you holde
Than is the shepe, that rouketh in the folde
For slayne is man, right as a nother beest
And dwelleth eke in prison, and in arrest
And hath sickenesse, and great aduersite
And oft tyme gyltelesse pardie.
What gouernance is in this prescience
That gyltelesse turmenteth innocence.
And encreaseth thus all my penaunce
That man is bounden to his obseruaunce
For gods sake to letten of his wyll,
There as a beest may all his lustes fulfyll
And whan a beest is dede, he hath no payn
But after his deth man mote wepe & playne
Though in this worlde he haue care and wo
Withouten doute it may stonden so.

The answeere of this lete I to diuynes
But well I wote, in this worlde gret pyne is
Alas I se a serpent or a theefe
That many a true man hath do mischeefe
Goon at his large, & where him lyst may turne
But I must ben in prison thurgh Saturne
And eke thurgh Juno, ialous & wood
That hath stroyed well nye all the blood
Of Thebes, with his wast walles wyde
And Venus sleeth me on that other syde
For ielousye, and fere of him Arcite.
Nowe wyll I slyne of Palamon a lyte
And let him in his prison stylle dwell
And of Arcite forth wyll I you tell.

The somer passeth, and the nyghtes longe
Encreseth double wise the paynes stronge
Both of the louer, and of the prisoner
I not which hath the wofuller mysser
For shortly to say, this Palamon
Perpetuell is dampned to prison
In chaynes and fetters to the deed
And Arcite is exiled on his heed
For euermore as out of that countre
Ne neuer more shall his lady se

Yow louers aske I nowe this question
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamon
That may se his lady day by day

But in prison mote he dwell alway
That other where him lyst may ride or go
But sene his lady shall he neuer mo
Nowe demeth as ye lyst, ye that can
For I woll tell forth my tale as I began.
Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was
Full ofte a day he swelte and sayd alas
For sene his lady shall he neuer mo
And shortely to conclude, all his wo
So mykell sorowe made neuer creature
That is or shalbe, while ỹ world may dure
His slepe, his meate, his drinke is him byraft
That leane he waxeth, & drye as a shaft
His eyen holow, and grisly to beholde
His hewe pale, and falowe as asshen colde
And solitary he was, and euer alone
And wayling all the nyght, makynge mone
And if he herde songe or instrument
Then would he wepe, he myght not stent
So feble were his spirites, and so lowe
And chaũged so, ỹ no mã coude him knowe
His speche ne his voice, thoughmẽ it herde
As in his gyre, for al the worlde it ferde
Nought comly lyke to louers maladye
Of Hereos, but rather lyke manye
Engendred of humours melancolyke
Before his celle fantastyke
And shortely was turned all vp so doun
Bothe habyte and disposycion
Of him, this wofull louer Arcyte
what shulde I all day of his wo endyte?
Whan he endured had a yere or two
This cruell torment, & this payne and wo
At Thebes in his countre, as I sayde
Upon a nyght in slepe as he him layde
Him thought howe ỹ the wynged Mercury
Before him stode, & bad him be mery
His slepy yerde in hande he bare vpryght
An hatte he wered vpon his heares bryght
Arayed was this god, as he tokē kepe
As he was, whan Argus toke his slepe
And saide hi thus: to Athenes shalt ỹ wende
There is the shapen of thy wo an ende
And with that word Arcite awoke & stert
Nowe truely howe sore that me smert
Quod he, to Athenes right now wol I fare
Ne for no drede of death shal I spare
To se my lady, that I serue and loue
In her presence recke I not to sterue.
And vp that word he caught a gret mirrour
And sawe that chaunged was al his colour
And sawe his visage all in a nother kynde
And ryght anon it ran him in his mynde
That sith his face was so disfygured
Of malady, the whiche he had endured
He myght well, yf that he bare him lowe
Liue in Athenes euermore vnknowe
And sene his Lady wel nigh day by day
And right anon he chaunged his aray
And clad him as a pore labourer
And all alone, saue onely a squier
That knewe his priuitie and al his caas
whiche was disgised pore ly as he was
To Athenes is he gon the nert way
And to the court he went vpon a day
And at the gate he proffered his seruice
To drugge & draw, what men wold deuise
And shortely of thys matter for to sayne
He fell in office with a chamberlayne
The whiche was dwelling with Emelye
For he was wise, and soone couth espye
Of euery seruaunt, which that serued here
well couth he hewen wode, & water bere
For he was yong and mighty for the nones
And therto he was strong & bygge of bones
To done that any wyght can him deuise
A yere or two he was in this seruice
Page of the chamber, of Emelye the bright
And Philostrate he sayed that he hight
But half so welbeloued man as he
Ne was there none in court, of his degre
He was so gentyl of condicion
That through all the court was his renon
They said that it were a charitie
That Theseus wold enhaunsen his degre
And put him in a worshipfull seruice
There as he might hys vertue exercise
And thus within a whyle his name is sprongē
Both of his dedes, and of his good tongē
That Theseus hath taken him so nere
That of his chamber he made him squiere
And yaue him gold to mayntaine his degre
And eke men brought him out of his contre
From yere to yere full priuely his rent
But honestly and slyly he it spent
That no man wondered how he it had
And thre yere in this wyse his lyfe he ladde
And bare him so in peace & eke in werre
Ther was no man that Theseus hathe der
And in this blysse let I nowe Arcite
And speake I woll of Palamon a lyte
In darkenesse horrible and strong prison
This seuen yere hath sitten this Palamon
Forpyned, what for wo and distresse
Who feleth double sore and heuinesse
But Palamon: that loue distrayneth so

That

That wode out of his wit, he goeth for wo
And eke therto he is a prisonere
Perpetuel, and not onely for a yere.
Who coud ryme in englishe properly
His martyrdome, forsoth it am nat I
Therfore I passe as lyghtly as I may.
It befel that in the seuenth yere in may
The thirde nyght, as olde bokes sayne
(That all this storye tellen more playne)
Were it by aduenture or by destyne
As when a thyng is shapen, it shalbe
That soone after midnight, Palamon
By helpyng of a frende brake his prison
And fleeth the cite, as fast as he may go
For he had yeue the gayler drinke so
Of a clarry, made of certayne wyne
With narcotyke and opye, of Thebes fyne
That al ỳ night though mē wold him shake
The gayler slept, he might not awake
And thus he fleeth as fast as he may.
The nyght was shorte, & fast by the day
That nedes cost he more hymselfe hyde.
And to a groue fast there besyde
With dredfull fote than stalketh Palamon
For shortly this was hys opinion
That in ỳ groue he wolde hym hide al day
And in the night then would he take his way.
To Thebes warde, his frendes for to prye
On Theseus to helpe him to warrye
And shortly, either he wold lese hys life
Or wynne Emely vnto his wyfe
This is the effect, and his entent playne.
Now wyll I turne to Arcite agayne
That litell wyst how nye was his care
Till ỳ fortune had brought him i ther snare
The mery larke, messanger of the day
Saleweth in her songe the morow gray
And fery Phebus riseth vp so bright
That all the orizont laugheth of the sight
And with his stremes, dryeth in the greues
The syluer droppes, hangyng in the leues.
And Arcite, that in the court royall
With Theseus hys squier principall
Is risen, and loketh on the mery day
And for to don his obseruaunces to may
Remembryng on the poynt of hys desire
He on his courser, starting as the fire
Is ridden into the feldes hym to play
Out of the court, were it a myle or twey
And to the groue of whiche I you tolde
By aduenture, hys way he gan holde
To maken him a garlonde of the greues
Were it of woodbynd or hauthorn leues
And loud he songe ayenst the sonne shene
May, with all thy flowres and thy grene
Welcom be thou fayre freshe may
I hope that I some grene get may
And from hys courser, with a lusty heart
Into the groue full hastely he sterte
And in a parke he romed vp and doun
There, as by aduenture thys Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might hym se
For sore afrayed of death was he
Nothing ne knewe he that it was Arcite
God wot he wolde haue trowed full lite
But soth is sayed, go sithen many yeres
That feld hath eyen, and wode hath eres
It is full fayre a man to beare hym euen
For all day men mete at vnset steuen
Full lytell wote Arcite of thys felawe
That was so nigh to herken of his sawe
For in the bushe sitteth he now full stille
When that Arcite had romed al his fill
And songen all the roundel lustely
Into a study he fell sodenly
As don these louers in their queynt geres
Now in the croppe, & now down in ỳ breres
Now vp now downe, as bokets in a well
Right as the fryday, sothly for to tell
Now it reyneth now it shyneth fast
Right so gan gery Venus ouercast
The hertes of her folke, right as her day
Is gerefull, right so chaungeth she aray
Selde is the friday al the weke lyke
When ỳ Arcite had song, he gan to syke
And sette him downe without any more
Alas quod he the day that I was bore
How longe Juno thrugh thy cruelte
Wylt thou warren Thebes the cite
Alas vbrought is to confusion
The blonde kynd of Cadmus & Amphion
Of Cadmus, which was the first man
That Thebes built, or first the towne began
And of the cite first was crowned kynge
Of his lynage am I, and of his sprynge
By very lyne, as of the stocke royall
And nowe I am so caytife and so thrall
That he that is my mortall enemy
I serue hym, as his squier poorely
And yet doeth me Juno well more shame
For I dare nat be knowen myn owen name
But there as I was wont to hight Arcite
Now hight I Philostrat nat worth a myte
Alas thou fell Mars, alas thou Juno
Thus hath youre yre out image all for do
Haue onely me, and wretched Palamon

That Theseus martreth in prison
And ouer all thys, to sleen me vtterly
Loue hath his fyry dart so brennyngly
I stycked through my true carefull hert
That shapen was my deth erst my shert
Ye sleen me with youre eyen Emelye
Ye ben the cause wherfore I dye
Of all the remenaunt of myn other care
Ne set I nat the mountaunce of a tare
So þ I could do ought to your pleasaunce
And with þ worde he fell down in a traunce
A longe tyme, and afterwarde he vp stert
This Palamon thought þ thrugh his hert
He felt a colde swerde sodenly glyde
For yre he quoke, no lenger would he abide
And when that he had herd Arcites tale
As he were wode, with face dred and pale
He stert him vp, out of the bushes thicke
And sayd: Arcite falfe traytour wicke
Nowe art thou hent, that louest my lady so
For whom that I haue thys payne & wo
And art my blod, and to my counsell swoin
As I haue full oft to de the here beforn
And hast be iaped here duke Theseus
And falsely hast chaunged thy name thus
I wyll be ded, or els thou shalt dye
Thou shalt not loue my lady Emelye
But I wol loue her onely and no mo
For I am Palamon thy mortall fo
Though þ I haue no weapen in this place
Out out of prison am astert by grace
I dred nat, that either thou shalt dye
Or thou ne shalt nat louen Emelye
Chese which thou wilt, or þ shalt not astert
This Arcite, with full dispytous hert
When he him knewe, & had his tale herde
As fers as a Lion, pulled out his swerde
And sayd: By god that sitteth aboue
Ne were þ thou art sicke, & wod for loue
And eke that þ no weapen hast in this place
Thou shouldest neuer out this groue pace
That thou ne shouldest dien of myn honde
For I defye the suertie and the bonde
Whiche þ thou sayest þ I haue made to the
What very fole, thinke wel that loue is fre
And I wyll loue her maugre al thy might
But for asmuche as thou art a knyght
And wylnest to daren here by battayle
Haue here my truth, to morowe I wyl not
Without wityng of any other wight (fayle
That here I wyll be founden as a knyght
And bringen harneys, right ynough for the
And chese the best, & leaue the worst for me
And meate & drinke, this night wyl I bring
Inough for the, & clothes for thy bedding
And if so be that thou my lady wyn
And slee me in thys wodde there I am in
Thou mayst well haue thy lady as for me.
This Palamon answerde, I graut it the
And thus they ben departed tyll a morowe
When eech of hem had laid his faith to borowe
O Cupide out of all charitie
O regne, þ wouldest haue no felowe with the
Full soth is sayd, that loue ne lordship
Wol nat his thankes haue any felyshyp
We fynde that of Arcite and Palamon
Arcite is ridden anon into the toun
And on the morow or it were day light
Full priuely two harneys hath he dyght
Bothe sufficient and mete to darreygne
The battayle in þ felde betwix hem tweyne
And on his horse, alone as he was borne
He carieth all his harneys hym beforne
And in the groue, at tyme and place yserte
That Arcite and thys Palamon ben mette
To chaungen gan the colour in her face
Right as the hunter in þ regne of Trace
That standeth at a gappe, with a speare
Whan hunted is the Lion or the beare
And hereth hym russhyng in the leues
And breaketh the bowes in the greues
And thinketh, here cometh my mortal enemy
Without fayle, he must be ded or I
For either I mote slee hym at the gappe
Or he mote slee me, yf me unhappe
So fersly they, in chaunging of her hewe
As farre as euerych of other knewe
There nas no good day, ne no saluing
But streyght, without worde or rehersyng
Euerych of hem helpeth for to arme other
As frendly, as he were his owne brother
And after that, with sharpe speares strong
They foynen eche at other wonder long
Thou mightest wenen, that thys Palamon
In his fighting, were a wodde lion
And as a cruell tygre was Arcite
As wilde bores gan they fight and smyte
That frothen white as fome for yre woode
Up to the ancle fonghten they in her bloode
And in this wise, I let hem fyghting dwel
And forth I wol of Theseus you tell.
The destenye and the ministre general
That executeth in the worlde ouer all
The purueyaunce, þ god hath sayd beforne
So strog it is, þ though þ world had swore
The contrary of thinge by ye and nay

Yet

Yet some tyme it shal fall on a day
That fell neuer yet in a thousand yere
For certaynly our appetites here
Be it of warre, peace, hate, or loue
All is ruled by the syght aboue
This meane I nowe by mighty Theseus
That for to hunt is so desirous
And namely at the great harte in may
That in his bed there daweth hym day
That he nys clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunt and horne, & hundes hym besyde
For in his hunting hath he suche delite
That it is all his ioy and appetite
To ben him selfe the great heartes bane
For after Mars, he serueth nowe Diane
Clere was the day, as I haue told or this
And Theseus, with all ioy and blys
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene
And Emely, yclothed all in grene
On huntyng ben they ridden royally
And to the groue, that stode there fast by
In which there was an hart, as mē him told
Duke Theseus the streyght way hath hold
And to the launde, he rydeth him full ryght
For thider was ỹ hart wōt to haue his flight
And ouer a broke, & so forth on his wey
This duke wol haue a cours at him or twey
With houndes, suche as him list cōmaunde
And whē ỹ duke was comen into ỹ launde
Under the sonne he loked, and that anon
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon
That fought ē breme, as it were bulles two
The bright swordes wenten to and fro
So hodyously, that with the lest stroke
It semed, that it wold haue fellen an oke
But what they weren, nothing he ne wote
This duke w his spores his courser smote
And at a start he was betwixt hem two
And pulled out his swerde, and cried, ho
No more, on payne of lesinge your heed
By myghtie Mars, he shall anone be deed
That smiteth any stroke, that I maye sene
But telleth me, what myster men ye bene
That ben so hardy for to fighten here
Without iudge or other officere
As though it were in listes royally
Ỹs Palamon aunswerd hastely
And sayd: sir, what nedeth wordes mo:
We haue the deth deserued bothe two
Two wofull wretches ben we & caytiues
That ben encombred of oure owne liues
And as thou art a ryghtfull lord & iudge
Ne yeue vs neither mercy ne refuge
But slee me first, for saynt charitie
But slee my felowe as well as me
Or slee him first, for though thou knowe it lite
This is ỹ mortall foe, this is Arcite
That fro thy land is banished on his heed
For which he hath deserued to be deed
For this is he, that came vnto thy yate
And sayd, that he hight Philostrate
Thus hath he iaped full many a yere
And thou hast made hym thy chefe squiere
And this is he, that loueth Emely.
For sith the daye is come that I shal dye
I make playnly my confession
I am thylke wofull Palamon
That hath thy prison broke wickedly
I am thy mortall foe, and he am I
That loueth so hotte Emely the bright
That I wol dye here present in her syght
Wherfore I aske deth and my iewyse
But slee my felowe in the same wise
For both we haue deserued to be slayne.
This worthy duke answerd anon againe
And sayd, thys is a short conclusion
Your owne mouth, by your confession
Hath damned you, and I wol it recorde
It nedeth not to pyne you with a corde
Ye shall be deed by myghty Mars the red
The quene anone for very womanhed
Gan for to wepe, and so dyd Emelye
And all the ladies in the companye
Great pitie was it, as thought hem all
That euer suche a chaunce should befall
For gentylmen they were of great estate
And nothyng but for loue was thys debate
And saw her blody woundes wide & soze
And all criden bothe lesse and more
Haue mercy lorde vpon vs women all
And on her bare knees downe they fall
And would haue kyst his fete there he stode
Tyll at the last, aslaked was his mode
For pyte renneth sone in gentle hert
And though he first for ire quoke and stert
He hathe considered shortly in a clause
The trespasses of hem bothe, & eke the cause
And although his ire her gilt accused
Yet in his reason he hem both excused
As thus: he thought well that euery man
Wyll helpe hym selfe in loue all that he can
And eke deliuer hym selfe out of prison
And eke his hert had compassion
Of wymen, for they wepen euery in one
And in his gentle hert he thought anone
And softe vnto hymselfe he sayd: fy

Upon

Upon a lorde that wyll haue no mercy
But be a lyon, bothe in worde and dede
To hem that ben in repentaunce & drede
As wyll as to a proude dispitous man
That wyll mayntayne that he fyrst began
That lorde hath hyryll of discrecion
That in suche cast can no dyfference
But wayeth pryde and humblesse after one
And shortly, whan his yre was thus a gone
He gan to loken vp with eyen lyght
And spake these wordes all on hyght.
The god of loue, ah, benedicite
Howe mighty, and howe great a lorde is he
Ayain his might ther gayneth no obstacles
He may be clepyd a god for his miracles
For he can maken at his owene gyse
Of euery herte, as hym lyst deuise
Lo here thys Arcite, and this Palamon
That quytely were out of my prison gon
And might haue lyued in Thebes royally
And knowen I am her mortall enemy
And that her deth is in my power also
And yet hath loue, maugre her eyen two
Brought hem hyther bothe for to dye
Nowe loketh, is nat thys a grete folye
Who may be a fole, but yf he loue
Beholde for goddes sake, that sitteth aboue
Se how they byrde, be they nat wel arayd
Thus hath her lord, the god of loue hem payd
Her wages, & her fees for her seruyse
And yet they wenen to be full wyse
That serue loue, for ought that may befall
But yet is this the best game of all
That she for whom they haue this labour
Can hem therfore, as muche thanke as me
She reccheth neuer of all thys grete fare
By god, than were a chykene of an hare
But all moste ben assayed hote and colde
A man moste bene a fole other yong or olde
I wotte it by my selfe ful yore agone
For in my tyme, a seruaunt was I one
And therfore syth I knowe of loues payne
I wotte howe sore it can a man distrayne
As he that oft hath be caught in her laas
I you forgeue all hoolly thys trespaas.
At the request of the quene, that kneleth here
And eke of Emely, my suster dere
And ye shall both anon vnto me swere
That ye shal neuer more my countre dere
Ne make warre vpon me nyght ne day
But ben my frendes in all that ye may
I you forgeue this trespas euery dele
And they him swore his asking faire & wele
And hym of lordshyp & of mercy prayed
And eke hem graunted grace, & thus he sayd

To speake of worthy lynage & rychesse
Though that she were a quene or a princesse
Eyke of you bothe is worthy doutles
To wed when tyme is, but nathelees
I speake, as for my suster Emely
For whom ye haue this strife & ielosy
Ye wote your selfe she may not wedde two
At ones, though ye fyghten euer mo
But one of you, all be hym lothe or leefe
He must go pype in an yuy leefe
This is to say, she may not haue bothe
Ne ben ye neuer so ielous, ne so wrothe
And therfore, I you put in this degree
That euche of you shall haue his destyne
As hym is shape, and herken in what wyse
Lo here your ende, of that I shall deuise.
My wyll is this, for plat conclusion
Without any repplicacion.
If that you lyketh, taketh it for the best
That euery of you shal go where hym lest
Frely, without raunsome or daunger
And this day fyfty wekes, fresh and newe
Euery of you shal bring an hundred knyghtes
Armed for lystes vpon all rightes
All redy to darreyn her by batayle
And this behote I you without fayle
Vpon my trouthe, as I am true knyght
That whether of you both hath that mighte
That is to sayn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spake of nowe
Slen his contrary, or out of lystes dryue
Him that I your Emely to wyue
To whom that fortune yeueth so faire a grace
The lystes shall I make in this place
And god so wysely on my soule rewe
As I shal rewarde hym, and trewe
Ye shall non other rede with me make
That one of you shalbe dede or take
And ye thinken this is wel ysayd
Sayth your auyse, & holde you wel apayd
This is your ende, and your conclusion
Who loketh lightly nowe but Palamon
Who springeth vp for ioye but Arcite
Who couthe tell, or who couthe endite
The ioye that is made in this place
When Theseus hath don so fayre a grace
But doun on knees wente euery manere wight
And thanked him, with al her hert & myght
And namely these Thebans many a syth
And thus with good hope and hert blyth
Ther

They take her leue, & hõward gan they ride
To Thebes ward, with olde walles wide
I trawe men would deme it negligence
If I forgeten to tell the dispence
Of Theseus, that goeth busily
To maken vp the lystes rially
That suche a noble Theatre, as it was
I dare well saye in this worlde there nas
The circute a myle was about
Walled with stone & dyched all about
Rõud was the shape, in maner of a compas
Full of degrees, the hight of sixty paas
That when a man was set on one degre
He letted not his felowe for to see
Estward there stode a gate of marble white
Westward right such a nother i thopposite
And shortly to conclude, suche a place
Was none in earth, as in so litell space
For in the lond there nas no crafty man
That geometry, or arsmetyke can
Ne portreyture, ne carver of Images
That Theseus ne gaue hym mete & wages
The theatre for to make and deuise
And for to do his rite and sacrifice
He estwarde hath vpon the gate above
In worshippe of Venus, the gode of loue
Do make an autre, and an oratory
And on the west syde, in memory
Of Mars he made suche another
That coste of golde largely a fother
And northwarde, in a turret on the wall
Of alabaster whyte and red coral
An oratory ryche for to see
In worshyp of Diane the gode of chaste
Hath Theseus do wrought in noble wyse
But yet had I forgeten to deuise
The noble carvynges and the portreatures
The shape, the countenaunce & the figures
That weren in the oratories thre
First in the temple of Venus thou mayst se
Wrought on the wal, ful pitously to behold
The broken sleepes, and the sighes cold
The lamentes and the water wepyng
The fyre strokes, and the desiryng
That loues seruauntes in this lyf enduren
The othes that her couenauntes assuren
Pleasaunce & hope, desire foolehardynesse
Beauty and youth, bauderie and rychesse
Charmes and sorcery lesinges & flatery
Dispence, busynesse, and ielousye
That wered of yelowe golde a garlande
And a cokowe sitting on her hande
Festes, instrumentes, carolles, & daunces
Iustes and aray, and all the circumstaunces
Of loue, whiche I reken and reken shal
By ordre, were paynted on the wal
And mo than I can make of mencyon
For sothly all the mount of Cytheron
Where Venus hath her principal dwelling
Was shewed on the wall in portreying
With all the ioy, and the fyne
Nought was forgeten fro poraile vnto the
Ne Narcisus the fayre of yore agon
Ne yet the folye of kyng Salomon
Ne yet the great strength of Hercules
Thenchauntment of Medea and Circes
Ne of Turnus, with his hardy fers corage
The ryche Cresus caytife in seruage
Thus may you se, that wisdom ne richesse
Beauty ne sleyght, strength ne hardynesse
Ne may with Venus holde champartye
For as her lyst the worlde may she gye
Lo, all these folke so caught were in her las
Tyl they for wo ful oft seyd alas
Sufficeth here one ensample or two
And though I coude reken a thousand mo
The statu of Venus glorious to se
Was made right fayre in the large se
And fro the navell doun all couered was
With waves grene, & bright as any glas
A cercle in her right hand had she
And on her hed, full semely for to se
A rose garland fresh, and well smelling
Above her hed doues flikering
Before her stode her sonne Cupido
Vpon his shoulders wynges had he two
And blynd he was, as it is often seen
A bowe he bad and arrowes bryght & kene
Why shulde I not as well tell you all
The portraiture, that was the about wall
Within the temple of myghty Mars the rede
All paynted was the wal in length & brede
Lyke to the estres of the grisly place
That hight the great temple of Mars in Trace
In thilke colde frosty regyon
Ther Mars hath his souerayne mansyon
First on the wall was peynted a forest
In which ther wonneth neyther man ne best
With knotty knarry barein trees olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to beholde
In which there was a rombel & a swough
As though a storme should bresten every bough
And downward vnder an hyl vnder a bent
Ther stode the temple of Mars armipotent
Wrought al of burned steel, of which the entre
Was long and streyght, & gastly for to see
And

And therout cam suche a rage & suche a vise
That it made all the gates for to ryse
The northern lyght in at the dores shone
For wyndowe on the wall was there none
Thrugh which men might any light discerne
The dores were al of athamant eterne
Yclenched overthwarte and endelonge
With yron tought, for to maken it stronge
Every piller, the temple to susteyne
Was as rounde, of yren bright & scheene
There saw I first the derke ymagining
Of felony, and eke the compassing:
The crudel yre, reddre as any glede
The pickpurse, and eke the pale drede
~~The smiler, with the knyfe vnder the cloke~~
The shepen brenning with the blacke smoke
The treason of the murdryng in the bedde
The open warre, with woundes al be bledde
Conteke with blody knives, & scharpe manace
All full of chyrking was that sory place
The slear of hym selfe yet saw I there
Hys herte blode hath bathed all hys here
The nayle ydryven in the shode on night
With colde deth, & mouthe gaping vpright
Amyddes of the temple sate Mischaunce
With Discomfort, and sory Countenaunce
Yet saw I ~~Woodnesse laughyng in his rage~~
Armed complaynt on theft & fyres courage
The carrayne in the busche, with throte ycorne
A thousand slayne, & nat of qualme ystorne
The tyraunt, with the pray by force yraft
The towne destroyd, ther was nothing laft
Yet saw I brent the shippes hoppesteres
The hunter strangled with the wilde beres
The sowe frettyng the chylde in cradell
The Cooke is scalded, for all hys longe ladel
Nought was forgete the infortune of Marte
The carter overrydden by his owne carte
Under the whele, full lowe he lay adown
There were also of Martes divisyon
The barbour, the bocher, and the smyth
That forgeth scharpe swordes on the styth
And al above depaynted in a toure
Saw I Conquest, sittyng in great honoure
With the scharpe swerde over hys heed
Hangyng by a subtyll twyned threed
Depaynted was ther, the slaughter of Julius
Of great Nero and of Antonius
Al be that tyme they were vnborne
Yet was hir dethe depaynted there before
By manacyng of Mars, right by figure
So was it shewed in that portreture
As is depaynted in the sterres above
Who shalbe dede or reis slayne for love
Suffiseth one ensample in stores olde
I may not reken them al, though I would
The statue of Mars vpon a carte stode
Armed, and loked grim as he were wode
And over his heed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that ben cleped in scriptures
That one (Puella) hight, the other (Rubeus)
This god of armes was arayed thus
A wolfe there stode before him at his fete
With eyen redde, and of a man he ete
With subtell penyl was paynted this story
In redoutyng of Marte and of hys glory.
Nowe to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortely as I can I wol me haste
To telle you all the discripcion
Depaynted ben the walles up and down
Of huntyng and eke chamfall chastite
There saw I howe wofull Calistope
When that Diane greved was with her
Was turned fro a woman to a bere
And afterwarde was she made the lode sterre
Thus was it paynted, I can say no ferre
Her sonne is eke a sterre as men may se
There saw I Dane turned vnto a tre
I mene not the goddesse Diane
But Venus doughter, which hight Dane
There saw I Acteon an hert ymaked
For vengeaunce that he saw Diane all naked
I saw how his houndes have him caught
And freten him, for they knewe him nought
Yet ypaynted was a litel ferthermore
Howe Athalant hunted the wilde bore
And Meliager, and many other mo
For whiche Diane wrought him care & wo
There saw I many a nother wonder story
Whiche me lyst not to drawe in memory
Thys goddesse full well upon an hert shete
With smal houndes all about her fete
And undereth her fete, she had a moone
Wexing it was, and sholde wane soone
In gaudy grene, her statue clothed was
With bowe in hand, and arrowes in caas
Her eyen cast she full lowe adowne
There Pluto hath his derke region
A woman travelyng was her before
But for her childe, so longe was vnborn
Full pytously Lucina gan she call
And sayd helpe, for thou mayst best of all
Wel could he paynte lively that it wrought
With many a florein he the hewes bought.

Now ben these lystes made, and Theseus
That

That at his great coſt hath arayed thus
The temples, and the theatre euerydel
Whan it was done, it liked him wonder wel
But ſtynte I wol of Theſeus alyte
And ſpeake of Palamon and of Arcite
The day approcheth of her returnyng
That euerich ſhuld an hũdred knightes brig
The batayle to darreyne, as I you tolde
And to Athenes, her couenaũtes to holde
Hath euerich of hem brought an. C. knightes
Well armed for the warre, at all ryghtes
And ſikerly, there trowed many a man
That neuer ſythens the world began
As for to ſpeke of knyghthode, of her honde
As farre as god hath made ſee or londe
Was of ſo fewe, ſo noble a company
For euery weyght, that loued chiualry
And wold his thãkes haue a paſſing name
Hath prayed, that he might be of that game
And wel was him, that therto choſen was
For if there fell to morowe ſuche a caas
Ye knowe well, that euery luſty knyght
That loueth paramours, & hath his myght
Were it in Englande, or elſ where
They wolde fayne wyllen to be there
To fyght for a lady, ah, [illegible]
It were a luſty ſyght for to ſe.
And ryght ſo farden they with Palamon
With him there went knyghtes many on
Some wold ben armed in an habergeon
And in a breſt plate, with a lyght gippon
And ſome wold haue a payre of plates large
And ſome wold haue a preue ſheld or a targe
Some wold be armed on his legges wele
And haue an axe, & ſome a mace of ſtele
There nas non newe guyſe, that it nas olde
Armed were they, as I haue you tolde
Euerich after his opinyon.
There maiſt thou ſe comynge with Palamon
Lygurge him ſelfe, the great kyng of Trace
Blacke was his berd, & manly was hys face
The ſercles of his eyen in his heed
They glouden betwyxt yelowe and reed
And lyke a lyon loked he aboute
With kemped heares on his browes ſtoute
His lymmes great, his brawnes ſtrong
His ſhoulders brode, his armes roũd & long
And as the guyſe was in his countre
Full hye vpon a chare of golde ſtode he
With foure white bulles in the trays
In ſtede of a cote armure, ouer hys harnays
With nayles yelowe, & bright as any golde
He hath a beares ſkyn, cole blacke for olde
His long heare was kẽpt behynde his backe
As any rauens fether it ſhone for blacke
A wrethe of gold arme gret, of huge weight
Upon his heed ſet full of ſtones bright
Of fyne rubyes and of dyamandes
About his chare there went white alaundes
Twenty and mo, as great as any ſtere
To hunten at the lyon, or at the wylde bere
And folowed him, with moſell faſt ybounde
Colers of gold, and torrettes fyled rounde
An hundred lordes had he in his route
Armed full well, with hertes ſterne & ſtoute.

With Arcite, in ſtories as men fynde
The great Emetryus the kyng of Inde
Upon a ſtede bay, trapped in ſtele
Couered with a cloth of gold diapred wele
Came ridyng lyke the god of Armes Marte
His cote armure was of clothe of Trace
Couched with perle, white, rounde & gret
His ſadle was of brent gold newe ybet
A mantel vpon his ſhoulders hongyng
Brette full of rubyes, red as fyre ſparkling
His cryſpe heare lyke rynges was yronne
And yͤ was yelow, & glyterynge as the ſonne
His noſe was hye, his eyen bryght citryn
His lyppes rudy, his colour was ſanguyn
A fewe freckles in his face yſpenge
Betwyxt yelow, & ſomdele blacke ymengle
And as a lyon he his eyen kaſte
Of fyue and twenty yere his age I geſſe
His berde was well begonne for to ſpryng
His voyce was as a trompet ſowndyng
Upon his heed he wered of laurer grene
A garlande freſhe and luſty for to ſene
Upon his hande he bare for his delite
An Egle tame, as any lylly white
An hundred lordes had he with him there
All armed ſaue her heades in her gere
Full richely in all maner thynges
For truſte the well, yͤ erles, dukes, & kynges
were gathered in this noble companye
For loue, and for encreaſe of chyualrye
About this kyng there ran on euery parte
Full many a tame lyon and lybarde
And in this wiſe, theſe lordes al & ſome
Ben on the ſonday to the cite come
Aboute prime, and in the toune alyght.
This Theſeus, this duke this worthi knight
Whan he had brought hem into his cyte
And inned hem, euryche after his degre
He feſteth hem, and doth ſo great laboure
To eaſen hem, and don hem all honoure

That yet men wenen that no mans wit
Of none eſtate coude amende it
The minſtralcye, the ſeruice at the feſt
The great yeftes, to the moſt and leſt
The rich array, throughout Theſeus paleis
Ne who ſate firſt ne laſt vpon the deys
What ladyes fayreſt ben or beſt daunceyng
Or which of hem can beſt daunce or ſyng
Ne who moſte feluyngly ſpeketh of loue
Ne what hawkes ſytten on perchen aboue
Ne what houndes lyggē on the flour adoun
Of all this now make I no mencion
But al the effecte, that thinketh me the beſte
Now cometh ỳ poynt, harkeneth if you leſte.

The ſonday at nyght, or day begā to ſpring
Whan Palamon the larke herde ſyng
Although it were nat day by houres two
Yet ſonge the larke, & Palamon right tho
With holy herte, and with an hie corage
He roſe vp, to wenden on his pylgrimage
Vnto the blyſful Cytherea benygne
I meane Venus, honourable and dygne
And in her hour, he walketh forth a paas
Vnto the lyſts, there the temple was
And doune he knelyth, & with humble chere
And herte ſore, he ſayd as ye ſhal here.
¶ Fayreſt of fayre, O lady myne Venus
Doughter of Ioue, and ſpouſe to Vulcanus
Thou glader of the mounte of Cytherum
For thilke loue thou haddeſt to Adon
Haue pyte of my bytter teares ſmerte
And take in thy humble prayer at thyn herte.
Alas, I ne haue no langage to tell
The effectes, ne the tormentes of myne hell
Myn herte may not myn harmes bewraye
I am ſo confuſed, that I can not ſaye
But mercy lady bright, that knoſte wele
My thought, & ſeeſt what harmes ỳ I fele
Conſyder all this, and rue vpon my ſore
As wyſly as I ſhall for euermore
Enforth my might, thy true ſeruaunt be
And holde warre alway with chaſtyte
That make I myn auow, ſo ye me helpe
I kepe not of armes for to yelpe
Ne I ne aſke to moſowe to haue victory
Ne renowne in this caſe, ne vayne glory
Of pryſe of armes, to blowen vp & doun
But wolde haue fully poſſeſſioun
Of Emelye, and dye in her ſeruice
Fynde thou the maner howe, & in what wyſe
I recche not, but it may better be
To haue victory of hem, ỳche of me
So that I haue my lady in myne armes
For though ſo be ỳ Mars is god of Armes
Your vertue is ſo great in heauen aboue
That yf you lyſt, I ſhall wel haue my loue
Thy temple ſhall I worſhyp euer mo
And on thine auter, where I ryde or go
I woll don ſacrifice, and fyres bete
And if ye wol not ſo, my lady ſwete
Than pray I you, to mowowe with a ſpere
That Arcite me thrugh the herte bere
Than recke I not, whan I haue loſt my lyfe
Though Arcite wynne her to wyfe
This is the effecte and ende of my prayere
Yeue me my lady, thou blyſſful lady dere.
Whan the oriſon was done of Palamon
His ſacrifice he did, and that anon
Ful pyteouſly, with all circumſtaunces
All tell I nat as now his obſeruaunces.
But at the laſt, the ſtatu of Venus ſhoke
And made a ſygne, wherby that he toke
That his prayer accepted was that day
For though the ſygne ſhewed a delay
Yet wiſt he well, ỳ graunted was his bone
And with glad herte he went him home full ſone.

The thyrd houre inequall that Palamon
Began to Venus temple for to goon
Vp roſe the ſonne, and vp roſe Emelye
And doth the temple of Diane gan hye
Her maydens, the whiche thider were lad
Ful duely with hem the fyre they had
The encenſe, the clothes, & the remenaunt all
That to the ſacrifice longen ſhall
The hornes full of mede as was the gyſe
There lacked nought to don her ſacrifyſe
Smoking the temple, full of clothes fayre
This Emely, with herte debonayre
Her body waſſhe, with water of a well
But how she dyd ryght I dare not tell
But it be any thyng in generall
And yet it were a game to here it all.
To him that meaneth wel, it were no charge
But it is good a man be at his large
Her bright heare was kempt & vnbreyded all
A crowne of a grene oke cerveyall
Vpon her herd ſet ful fayre and mete
Two fyres on the auter gan ſhe bete
And dyd her rytes, as men may beholde
In Stace of Thebes, and theſe bokes olde
Whan kendled was ỳ fire, with pitous chere
Vnto Diane ſhe ſpake as ye may here.
¶ O chaſte goddeſſe of the wodes grene
To whom both heuen & erthe and ſee is ſene

Quene

Quene of the reygne of Pluto, derke & low
Goddesse of maydēs, ỹ myn hert hathe know
ful many a yere, and woste what I desyre
Is kepe me fro the vengeaunce of thyn yre
That Attheon aboughte cruelly
Chaste goddesse, well woste thou that I
Desyre to ben a mayde all my lyfe
Ne neuer wolle I be lone ne wyfe
I am thou woste well of thy company
I wolde, and loue huntyng and bestes
And for to walken in the woddes wylde
And not for to ben a wyfe, & ben with childe
Noght wolle I knowe company of man
Now helpe me lady sythe you may and can
For thy thre formes that thou hast in the
And Palamon, ỹ hath such a loue to me
And the Arcite, that louyth me so sore
This grace I pray the, withouten more
And send loue and peace betwixt hem two
And fro me turne awaye her hertes so
That al her hote loue, and her desyre
And al her bote torment, and all her fyre
Be queynt, or turned in an other place
And if so be thou wolte not do me that grace
Or if so be my destenye be shapen so
That I shal nedes haue one of hem two
As sende me hym that most desyreth me
Beholde goddesse of clene chastite
The bytter teares that on my chekes fall
Sen thou art a mayde, and kepere of vs all
My mayden hede thou kepe, & wel conserue
And while I lyue, a mayden wolle I ỹ serue.
¶ The fyres brenne vpon the auter clere
While Emely was thus in her prayere
But sodenly she sawe a thing queynte
For right anon, one of the fyres queynte
And quyked agayn, and after that anon
That other fyre was queynte, and al agon
And as it queynte it made a whystelyng
As doth the wete brondes in her brennyng
And at the brondes ende, out ran anon
As it were bloody dropes many one
For wherof to sore agaste was Emelye
That she was wel nye madde, & gan to crye
For she ne wyste what it signyfyed
But only for the feare thus she cried
And wepte, that it was pyte for to here
And therwithal Diane gan to apere
With bowe in honde, right as an hūtaresse
And sayd doughter, stynte thyn heuynesse
Among the goddes hye it is affirmed
And by eternal worde, writtē & confyrmed
Thou shalt ben wedded to one of tho
That haue for the so moche care & wo
But vnto whiche of hem I may not tell
Farewell, for I maye no lenger dwell
The fyres, whiche on myn auter brenne
Shall declare, er that thou gon henne
This auenture of loue, as in this case
And with that word, the arowes in ỹ case
Of the goddesse, clatteren faste and ryng
And forth she went, and made vanesshyng
For whiche this Emelye astonyed was
And sayd: what mowneth this, alas
I put me vnder thy protection
Diane, and vnder thy disposition
And home she goth the nexte way
This is the effecte there is no more to say.

The nexte houre of Mars folowynge this
Arcite vnto the temple walked is
Of fyers Mars, to done his sacrifyse
With all the myght of his payenim wyse
With prous herte, and his deuocion
Right thus to Mars he sayd his oryson.
¶ O stronge god, that in the regnes colde
Of Trace honoured arte, and lorde yholde
And hast in euery regne and euery londe
Ful armes, al the bridle in thyn honde
And hem fortunest, as the lyste deuyse
Accepte of me my pyteous sacrifice
If so be my thought may deserue
And that my myght be worthy for to serue
Thy godhede, that I may ben one of thyne
Than pray I the, for that thou me enpyne
For thilke payne, and thilke hote fyre
In whiche thou brentest whylom for desyre
Whan thou vsedest the fayre beaute
Of fayre yonge freshe Venus free
And haddest her in thyn armes, as thy wyf
Al though thou were on a tyme mysdyf
With Vulcanus had caught the in his laas
And founde the lyggyng by his wyfe alas
For thilke sorow, that was in thine herte
Haue ruthe as wel on my payne smerte
I am yong and vnconnyng, as thou wost
And as I trowe, with loue offended most
That euer was any lyues creature
For she that dooth me all this wo endure
Ne recheth neuer, whether I synke or flete
And wel I wote, or she me mercy hete
I moste with strength wynne her in this place
And wel I wote, withoute helpe or grace
Of the, for me my strength not auayle
Thu helpe me lorde to morowe in my batayle
For thilke fyre, that whylom brente the

Is well as the fyre now brenneth me
And do,that I to morowe haue the victory
Myn be the trauayle,& thine be the glory
Thy soueraine temple wol I most honouren
Of any place,and alway most labouren
In thy plesaunce,and in thy crakes stronge
And in thy temple,I wol my baner honge
And all the armes of my companye
And euermore,vntyll the day I dye
Eterne fyre I wol beforne the fynde
And eke to this auowe I wol me bynde
My berde,my heare,ꝑ hongeth lowe adoun
That neuer yet felte offencioun
Of rasour ne of shere,I wol the yeue
And ben thy true seruaunt whyle I lyue
Now lord haue ruthe vpō my sorowes sore
Yeue me the victory,I aske the no more.
¶ The prayer stynte of Arcite the stronge
The ringes on the temple dore they ronge
And eke the dores clatren full faste
Of whiche Arcite somwhat him agaste.
The fyres brennen vpon the auter bryght
That it gan all the temple lyght
A swete smel anon the grounde vp yaf
And Arcite anon his honde vp haf
And more ensence in to the fyre he caste
With other rytes mo,and at the laste
The statu of Mars begā his hauberke ring
And with that sounde he herd a murmuring
Ful lowe and dym,that sayd thus:victory
For which he yaf to Mars honour & glory
And thus with ioye,& hope well to fare
Arcite anon in to his inne is fare
As fayne as foule is of the bryght sonne
And right anon such a stryfe is begonne
For thilke graunting,in the heuen aboue
Betwyxt Venus,the goddesse of loue
And Mars the sterne god armipotente
That Iupiter was busy it to stente
Tyl that the pale Saturnus the colde
That knewe so many auentures olde
Founde in his experyence and arte
That he ful sone hath pleased euery parte
And sothe is said,elde hath gret auauntage
In elde is both wisedome and vsage
Men may the olde out renne,but not oute rede
Saturne anon,to stynten stryfe & drede
Al be it that it be agayne his kynde
Of all this strife he can remedy fynde
My dere doughter Venus,quod Saturne
My course that hath so wyde for to turne
Hath more power than wote any man
Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan
Myne is the prison in the derke cote
Myn is ꝑ stragling & the hōging by ꝑ throte
The murmure,and the churles rebellyng
The groynyng,and the priuy empoysonyng
I do vengeaunce and playne correccion
Whyle I dwell in the sygne of the Lyon
Myn is the ruyne of the hye halles
The fallyng of the toures & of the walles
Vpon the mynor,or vpon the carpenters
I slewe Sampson,shakyng the pylers
And myn ben the maladyes colde
The derke treasons,and the castels olde
My lokyng is the father of pestylence
Now wepe no more,I shal do my dilygence
That Palamon,that is thin owne knyght
Shall haue his lady,as thou him behyght
Though Mars shal helpe his knight natheles
Betwyxt you it mote somtyme be pees
Al be ye not of one complexcion
That causeth al day such deuysion
I am thyn ayle,redy at thy wyll
Weepe no more,I wol thy lust fulfyll.
¶ Now wol I stynte of these goddes aboue
Of Mars,& of Venus goddesse of loue
And playnly I wol tellen you as I can
The great effecte,of whiche that I began.

Great was the feast in Athenes that day
And eke that lusty season in May
Made euery wight to ben in such plesaunce
That al that day iusten they and daunce
And spenten it in Venus hye seruyse
But because that they shulden aryse
Erly,for to se the great fyght
Vnto her rest went they at nyght
And on the morow whan day gan spryng
Of horse and harneys,noyse & clateryng
There was in the hostelryes al aboute
And to the palays rode there many a route
Of lordes,vpon stedes and palfreys.
There mayest thou se deuising of harneys
So vncouthe,so riche,& wrought so wele
Of goldsmythry,of braudry,and of stele
The shyldes bright,testers,and trappers
Gold hewē helmes,hauberkes & cote armers
Lordes in paramentes,on her courseres
Knyghtes of retenue,and eke squyers
Nayling the speres,and helmes bokelyng
Gyggyng of shyldes with layners lacyng
There as nede is,they were nothyng ydell
The fomyng stedes on the golden bridell
Gnawyng,and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hammer,tydyng to and fro

Yemen

Yemen on foote, and commune many one
With short staues, thycke as they may gone
Pypes, trompes, nakoners, and clarions
That in the batayle blowen blody sowns
The palays ful of people vp and down
Here thre, there ten, holdyng her question
Deuisyng of these Theban knightes two
Some said thus, some said it shuld be so
Some helde w̄ him with the blacke berde
Some w̄ the balled, some w̄ the thick herde
Some said he loked grym, & wolde fyght
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of weight.
Thus was the hall full of deuisyng
Longe after the sonne gan to spring
The great Theseus of his slepe gan wake
With minstralcye & noyse that they make
Helde yet the chambre of his palays riche
Tyl that the Theban knightes, both yliche
Honoured weren, and in to the place ifette.
¶ Duke Theseus is at the wyndow sette
Arayed right as he were a god in trone
The people preased thyder warde full sone
Him for to sene, and done him hye reuerence
And eke for to here his hest & his sentence
An heraude on a scaffolde made an oo
Tyl all the noyse of the people was ydo
And whan he saw the people of noyse stylle
Thus shewed he ỹ myghtye dukes wyll.
¶ The lorde hath of his hye discrecion
Considred, that it were destruccion
To gentle blood, to fyghten in this gyse
Of mortall battayle, now in this empryse
Wherefore to shapen, that they shall not dye
He wol his first purpose modifye
No m̄ therfore, vp payne of lose of lyfe
No maner shotte, polar, ne shorte knyfe
In to the lystes sende, or thyder bring
Ne short swerde to sticke with point byting
No man ne drawe, ne beare it by his side
Ne no man shall to his felowe ryde
But one course, w̄ a sharpe grouden spere
Foyne if him lyst on foote, him selfe to were
And he that is at mischefe, shal be take
And not slaine, but brought to the stake
That shal ben ordayned on either syde
But thider he shal by force, and there abyde
And if so fal, that the chieftayne be take
On eyther syde, or els sleen his make
No lenger shall the turnament laste
God spede you, gothe and layeth on faste
With swordes & long maces fighte̅ your fil
Goth now your way, this is the lordes wil.
¶ The voice of the people touched heuen
So loude cryed they with merry steuen
God saue suche a lorde, that is so good
He wylleth no destruccion of blood
Vp gothe the trompes and the melodye
And to the lystes, rideth so the compayne
By ordynaunce, throughout the cyte large
Honged with cloth of gold, & not with sarge
Ful lyke a lord this noble duke gan ryde
These two Thebans on euery syde
And after rode the quene and Emelye
And after that another compayne
Of one and other, after her degre
And thus they passen throughout the cyte
And to the lystes comen they be by tyme
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme
Whan set was Theseus ful ryche and hye
Ypolita the quene, and Emelye
And other ladyes in degrees aboute
Unto the seres preaseth all the route
And westward, through ỹ yates vnder marte
Arcite, and eke an hundred of his parte
With baner reed, is entred right anon
And in the selue momet entred Palamon
Is, vnder Uenus, estwarde in that place
With baner white, & hardy chere & face
And in al the world, to seken vp and down
So euen without variacion
There nas suche companies twey
For there nas none so wyse that coude sey
That any had of other auauntage
Of worthynes, ne of estate, ne age
So euen were they chose to gesse
And in to the renges fayre they ben dresse
Whan that her names red were euery chone
That in her nombre, gyle were there none
Tho were the gates shyt, & cryed was loude
Do now your deuer yong knightes proude.
¶ The herauldes left her prykyng vp & down
Now ryngen trompes loude & clarioun
There is no more to say, este and west
In goth the sharpe speres sadly in the arest
In gothe the sharpe spurres into the syde
There se men who can iust, & who can ryde
There shyuereth shaftes, vpon sheldes thicke
He feleth through the herte spoune ỹ pricke
Up spryngeth ỹ speres, twenty fote on highte
Out goth the swordes, as ỹ syluer bryghte,
The helmes they to hewe, and to shrede
Out burst ỹ blood, with sterne stremes rede
With mighty maces, ỹ bones they to bruste
He throughỹ thickest of ỹ thrōg gan thruste
Ther stōbleth stedes stronge, & doun goth al
He rolled vnder the foote as doth a ball

He foyneth vn his fete with a tronchoun
And he hurieth with his horse adoun
He thrugh ỳ body is hurte, and syth ytake
Maugre his heed, & broughte vnto the stake
As forward was, right there he must abyde
An other is ladde on that other syde
And somtyme dothe hem Theseus to reste
Hem to refreshe, and drinke if hem leste.

Full ofte a day haue these Thebans two
To gyther met, and don eche other wo
Vnhorsed hath eche other of hem twey
Ther was no tygre, in ỳ vale of Galaphey
Whan her whelpe is stole, whan it is lyte
So cruell on the hunte, as is Arcyte
For ielous herte, vpon this Palamon
Ne in Belmarye, there is no fel lyon
That hunted is, or for his hungre woode
Ne of his pray, desyreth so the bloode
As Palamon to slee his foe Arcite
The ielous strokes on her helmes byte
Out renneth ỳ bloode on both her sydes rede
Sometyme an ende there is of euery dede
For er the sonne vnto the west wente
The stronge kynge Emetrius gan hente
This Palamon, as he faught vp this Arcite
And made his swerde depe in his flesshe byte
And by force of twenty is he take
Vnyolden, and drawen to the stake
And in the rescous of this Palamon
The stronge kyng Ligurge is borne adoun
And kyng Emetrius, for all his strength
Is borne out of his sadle a swerdes length
So hurt him Palamon or he were take
But al for naught, he was broght to ỳ stake
His hardy herte might him helpe naught
He must abyde, whan that he was caught
By force, and eke by composycion
Who so soroweth now but woful Palamon
That mote no more gon agayne to fyght.

And whan ỳ Theseus had seue ỳ fyght
He cryed hoe: no more, for it is don
Ne more shall lenger to this felowe gon
I will be true iuge, and not partye
Arcite of Thebes shall haue Emelye
That by his fortune hath her fayre ywonne
Anon there is a noyse of people bygonne
For ioye of this, so loude & hye with all
It semed that the lystes shulde fall.

What can now faire Venus done abone
What sayth she now, what doth ỳ quene of
But wepeth so, for wantyng of her will
Til that her teares on the lystes fell
And she sayd: I am ashamed doutles

Saturne sayde: doughter holde thy pees
Mars hath al his wil his knyght hath his done
And by mine herd, thou shalte be eased sone.

The trompes & the loud mynstralcye
The heraudes, that so loude yel and crye
Ben in her wele, for ioye of dan Arcite
But herkeneth me, & stynteth noyse a lyte
Whiche a myracle there byfell anon.

The fyers Arcite hath his helme of don
And on a courser, for to shewe his face
He prycketh endlong the large place
Lokyng vpwarde vpon Emelye
And she ayen him caste a frendly eye
(For women, as to speke in commune
They folowen all the fauour of fortune)
And was al his chere, as in his herte
Out of the grounde a fyre infernall sterte
Fro Pluto sent, at the request of Saturne
For whiche his horse for feare gan to turne
And lepe a syde, and foundred as he lepe
And er that Arcyte may taken kepe
He pyght him on the pomel of his heed
That in the place he lay, as he were deed
His brest to brosten with his sadel bowe
As blacke he lay as any cole or crowe
So was the blood yronne in his face.

Anon he was brought out of the place
With hert sore, to Theseus paleys
Tho was he corven out of his harneys
And in a bedde ybrought ful fayre and blyue
For he was yet in memorye, and on lyue
And alway cryeng after Emelye.

Duke Theseus, with all his compayne
Is comen home to Athenes his cyte
With all blysse and great solempnyte
Al be it that this auenture was fall
He wold not discomforte hem all
Wen sayd eke, that Arcite shulde not dye
He shulde ben yhealed of his maladye
And of an other thyng they were as fayne
That of hem all there was none slayne
Al were they sore hurte, and namely one
That with a spere was thronled his brest bone
Two other woundes, & two broke armes
Some had salues, and some had charmes
Fermaces of herbes, and eke saue
They dronken, for they wold her lyues haue
For which this noble duke, as he well can
Comforteth and honoureth euery man
And made reuel al the longe nyght
Vnto the straunge lordes, as it was ryght
Ne there nas holde no discomfortyng
But as iustes or at tourneyng

For sothly there nas no discomfiture
For falling is holde but an auenture
Ne to be lood by force vnto a stake
Vnyolden, and with twenty knyghtes take
One person a lone, withouten any mo
And haryed forth, by arme, fote, and too
And eke his stede dryuen forth with staues
With footemen, bothe yemen and knaues
It was aretted him no vilanye
There may no man cleape it cowardye
For whiche anone, duke Theseus did crye
To stynten all rancour and enuye
The grete as well of one syde as of other
And either syde lyke, as others brother
And yaue hem rightes after her degre
And fully helde a fest dayes thre
And conueyed the knyghtes worthely
Out of hys towne, a dayes iorney largely
And home went euery man the right waye
Ther nas no more but fare wel a haue good (daye
Of this battayle, I wol no more endite
But speake of Palamon and Arcyte
Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreaseth at his hert more and more
The clotered blode, for any liche crafte
Corrumped, and is in his body lafte
That neither veyne blode, ne ventousyng
Ne drynke of herbes, may be helpyng
Ne drynke of herbes, may be helpyng
By vertue expulsed, or anymall
For thylke vertue cleaped naturall
Ne may the venym voyde, ne expell
The pypes of his longes began to swell
And euery lacerte, in his brest adown
Is shent with venym and corrupcion
Him gayneth neither, for to get his lyfe
Vomite vpwarde, ne downwarde laxatife
All is to brust thylke regyon
Nature hath no dominacion
And certainly ther as nature wol nat wirch
Farwel phisike, go beare the corse to chirch
This is al a some, that Arcite must dye
For whiche he sendeth after Emelye
And Palamon his cosyn dere
Than sayd he thus, as ye shall after here
Nought may my woful spirite in my hert
Declare a poynt of all my sorowes smert
To you my lady, that I loue moste
But I bequeth the seruyce of my goste
To you abouen any creature
Sin that my lyfe may no lenger dure
Alas the wo, alas my paynes stronge
That I for you haue suffered, and so longe
Alas the dethe, alas myn Emelye
Alas departyng of our company
Alas myn hertes quene, alas my liues wife
Myn hertes lady, ender of my lyfe
What is the world, what asken men to haue?
Now with his loue, now in his colde graue
Alone withouten any companye
Farwel my swete foe, myn Emelye
And softe take me in your armes twey
For the loue of god, herkeneth what I sey.
I haue here with my cosin Palamon
Had strife and rancour, many a day agon
For loue of you, and for my ielousye
And Jupiter so wysely my soule gye
To speaken of a seruaunt properly
With circumstaunces all trewely
That is to saye, trouth, honor, and knighthede
Wisdom, humblesse, estate, and hye kinrede
Fredom, and all that longeth to that arte
So Jupiter haue of my soule parte
As in this world, right nowe knowe I non
So worthy to be loued as Palamon
That serueth you, and wol don al his life
And yf that you shall euer ben a wife
Forget not Palamon, the gentle man
And with that word his speche fayle began
For from his feet vnto his brest was come
The colde dethe, that had hym nome
And yet more ouer, for in hys armes two
The vitall strength is lost, and all a go
Saue onely the intellect, withoute more
That dwelled in his hert sicke and sore
Gan faylen, when the hert felte dethe
Dusked hys eyen two, and fayled brethe
But on hys lady, yet cast he his eye
His last worde was, mercy Emelye
His spirite chaunged, and out went there
Whether warde I can not tell, ne where
Therfore I stynt, I am no diuinistre
Of soules fynde I not in thys regystre
Ne me lest not thylke opinions to tell
Of hem, though they writen wher they dwell
Arcite is colde, that Mars his soule gye
Nowe wol I speake forth of Emelye.
Shright Emely, and howleth Palamon
And Theseus hys sister vp toke anon
Swounyng, and bare her fro his corse away
Whatt helpeth it to tary forth the day
To tellen how she wept both euen and morow
For in suche case women haue mucht sorow
Whan that her husbandes ben fro hem go
That for the more parte they sorowen so
Or elis fallen in suche maladye
That at the last, certaynly they dye

Infinite ben the sorowe and the teres
Of olde folke, and folke of tender yeres
In al the towne for deth of this Theban
For hym ther wepeth bothe childe and man
So great wepyng was there not certayn
Whan Hector was brought, al fresshe islayn
To Troy alas, the pety that was there
Cratchyng of chekes, rentyng eke here
Ay why wold'st thou be dead, thus womē cry
And hadden gold ynough, and Emely
No man may glad Theseus
Saving his olde father Egeus
That knewe thys worldes transmutacion
As he had sene it, bothe up and doun
Joy after wo, and wo after gladnesse
And shewed hym ensamples and lykenesse
Right as there dyed never man, quod he
That he ne syued in erth in some degre
Right so there syued never man he sayde
In this worlde, that some tyme he ne deyde
This worlde is but a thorowfare ful of wo
And we ben pilgrimes, passing to and fro
Deth is an ende of every worldes sore
And over all this yet sayd he much more
To this effect, ful wysely to enorte
The people, that they shoulde hem reconforte
Duke Theseus with all his busy cure
Casteth how, where that the sepulture
Of good Arcite, shall best ymaked be
And eke most honorable of degre
And at the last he took conclusion
That there as Arcite and Palamon
Had for love the battayle hem bytwene
That in the same fyre grove, sweet & grene
There as he had his amorous desires
His complaynt, & for love his bote fires
He wolde make a fyre, in whiche the office
Funerall he might hem all accomplise
For hath anon commaunded to hacke & hewe
The okes olde, and lay hem all on a rewe
In culpons, well arayd for to brenne
His officers with swifte fote they renne
And ryght anon at his commaundement.
And after Theseus hath be sent
After a bere, and it all over spradde
With cloth of golde, the richest that he had
And of the same sute he clothed Arcite
Upon hys handes his gloues whyte
Eke on his hed a crowne of laurell grene
And in hys hand a swerde ful bryght & kene
He layed hym bare the visage on the bere
Therwith he wept that pite was to here
And for the people shuld sene hym all
Whan it was day he brought hym to the hall
That roreth of the cry & of the sorowes soun
Thogan thys wofull Theban Palamon
With glitering herd, & ruddy shining here
In clothes blacke, dropped all with teres
And passyng other of wepyng Emely
The rufullest of all the company.
And in as muche as the servise shulde be
The more noble, and ryche in his degre
Duke Theseus let forth the stedes bring
That trapped were in stele al glyteryng
And covered with the armes of dan Arcite
Upon these stedes great and whyte
There sate folke, of which one bare his shelde
Another his spere, in hys hande held
The thirde bare with hym a bowe turkes
Of brent gold was the case & eke the harnes
And ryddem forth a pace with sory chere
Toward the grove, as ye shall after here.
The noblest of the grekes, that there were
Upon her shulders carved the bere
With dulle pace, and even red and wepe
Thorughout the cite, by the maysters strete
That spradd was al in blak, & that wyde hir
Knyght of the same is the stede yclepe
Upon the ryght hande wente Egeus
And on the other syde duke Theseus
With spices in her hande of golde full fyne
All full of bery, myrthe, blode, and wyne
Eke Palamon, with full great compayne
And after that, cam wofull Emely
With fyre in hande, as was the rythe the gyse
To don the office of funerall servyse
High labour, and full greate apparatyng
Was at servyse, and at fyre making
That with his grene toppe the heven raught
And rounde a boute of bird and trees straught
This is to sayn, the bowes were so brode
Of trowe first there was layd many a lode.
But how the fyre was maked up on height
And eke the names how the trees hevght
As oke, firre, birch, asp, alder, holme, popler
Wilow, boleyn, plane, ashe, elder, elme, laure
Maple, thorne, bech, whipultre
How they were felde, shal not be told for me
For how the gobbes renne up and doun
Disherited of her habitacion
In whiche they wonned in rest and pes
Nymphes, Fauny, and Amadriades
Ne how the beestes, and the birdes all
Flowen for fere, when the trees fall
Ne how the grounde agast was of the light
That was not wonte to se the sonne bright
Ne

Ye howe ꝑ fyre was couched fyrst with stre
And than with dyre styckes clouen a thre
And than wᵗh grene wodde, and spicery
And than with clothe of golde and perry
And garlondes hangyng wᵗh many a floure.
The myrre, the ensence, wyth swete odoure
Ye how Arcite lay among al this
Ye what ryche ie aboure his body is
Ye howe that Emely, as was the gyse
Put in the fyre of funeral seruise
Ye how she vowed, whā maked was ꝑ fyre
Ye what she spake, ne what was her desyre
Ye what ie welles men in the fyre caste
Than that ꝑ fyre was great ꝑ bren fast
Ye how she cast her sherde, ꝑ some her spere
And of her vestimentes, which ꝑ they were
And cuppes ful of wyne, mylke, ꝑ blode
Into the fyre, that bren as it were woode
Ye how the grekes with a huge route
Thryse rydden all the fyre aboute
Upon the left hande, wᵗh a loude shoutyng
And thryse with her spores clatteryng
And thryse how the ladyes gan crye
Ye how that lasse was homward Emelye
Ye how that Arcite is bren to aschen colde
Ye how the lyche wake was holde
All that nyght, ne how the grekes play
The wake playes, nere I nat to say
Ne how they fersly fought at the gappes
How somme were slayne with swerdes and with clappes
And somme with arwes stode in her sydes
Ne how the cruel Theseus gan dyde
To bryng hem bothe wᵗhin Athenes gate
Ne how the ladyes wepten for her mate
That thought her hertes brast for sorowful thought
Ne how men drewe the corse to grounde ful nought
Ne how eche lamented other mannes wo
Ne how Creusa swouned whan she so
Her lorde Theseus, ne how Ypolita
The wepful wydowe, ne how Emelya
Ne how that lamentacion was non
But streyght unto the point I wol gon
And make of my longe tale an ende.

By processe and by lengthe of yeres
All stynteth the mournyng and the teres
Of grekes by one generall assent
Than semed me there was a parlement
At Athenes, upon certayne poynt and caas
Among the which poynts yspoken was
To have with certayne countrees alyaunce
And have of Thebans fully obeysaunce
For which this noble Theseus anon
Let sende after this gentyl Palamon
Unwyste of him what was the cause ꝑ why:
But in his blacke clothes sorowfully
He came at his commaundement on hye
Tho sente Theseus after Emelye.
Whan they were set, a stylnesse was ꝑ place
And Theseus abydden hath a space
Er any worde came from his wyse brest
His eyen sette he there hym lest
And with suche a sadde visage, he syked styl
And after that, ryght thus he sayd his wyl

¶ The fyrst mouer of the cause above
Whan he first made the fayre chaine of loue
Great was the effecte, ꝑ hie was his entente
Well wist he why, ꝑ what therof he mente
For with that fayre chayne of loue he bonde
The fyre, the eyre, the water, and the londe
In certayne bondes, that they may nat flee
That same prince and that mouer, quod he
Hath stablysshed this wretched worlde adon
Certein dayes and duracion
To all that are engendred in this place
Over the whiche day they may nat pace
All mowe they yet the dayes abredge
There nedeth non auctorite to ledge
For it is proued by experience
But that me lyst declare my sentence
Then may men by this order discerne
That thilke mouer stable is and eterne
Well may men knowe, but he be a fole
That every parte deryued from his hoole
For nature hath nat taken his begynnyng
Of one parte or cantel of a thyng
But of a thynge that perfyt is and stable
Descendyng so, tyll it be corrumpable
And therfore of his wyse purueyaunce
He hath so well beset his ordynaunce
That spaces of tymes and progressions
Shullen endure by successions
And nat eterne, withouten any lye
Thus mayst thou understande and se at eye
Loke the oke, that hath so longe a norisshyng
Fro the tyme ꝑ it begynneth fyrst to sprynge
And hath so longe a lyfe, as ye may se
Yet at the last, wasted is the tree
Considereth eke, how that the harde stone
Under our fete, on which we treade ꝑ gone
Yet wasteth it, as it lyeth in the wey
The brode ryuer somtyme wexeth dry
The great townes, se we wane and wende
Than ye se that all thys thyng hath ende
And man and woman se shall we also
That nedeth in one of the termes two
That is to sayn, in youth or elis in age
He moste dye, a kyng as well as a page
Some in his bedde, some in the depe se
Some in the large feilde, as ye may se
It helpeth not, all goeth that ylke wey
Than may you se that all thyng moste dey
What maketh thys, but Jupiter the kyng
That is prince, and cause of all thyng
Conuertynge all to hys proper wyll

From

From whiche it is derined soth to tell
And here agayne, no creature on lyue
Of no degre auayleth for to stryue
Than is it wysdome, as thinketh me
To make vertue of necessite
And take it well, that we may not eschewe
And namely that to vs all is dewe
And who so grutcheth aught, he doth folye
And rebell is to hym that all may gye
And certaynly, a man hath moste honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour
When he is syker of his good name
Thā hath he don his frēdes ne hi no shame
And gladder ought his frendes be of his deth
When with honour yolde is vp the breth
Than whan hys name apaled is for age
For all forgetten in his vassellage
Than it is best, as for a worthy fame
To dyen, when he is best of name
The contrary of all thys is wilfulnesse
Why grutchen we? why haue we heuynesse
That good Arcite of cheualry the flour
Departed is, with duety and with honour
Out of thys foule prison, of thys lyfe?
Why grutchen here his cosyn and his wife
Of his welfare, that loueth hym so wele
Can he hem thāk? may god wote neuer a dele
That both his soule, & eke hem offende
And yet they mowe not her lustes amende?
What may conclude of thys long story
But after sorowe, I rede vs be mery
And thanke Iupiter of al hys grace
And er we departen from thys place
I rede we maken of sorowes two
One parfite ioye, lastyng euer mo
And loke nowe where moste sorow is herin
There wol I fyrste amende and begyn
Suster quod he thys is my full assent
With all the people of my parlement
That gentle Palamon, your owne knyght
That seruеth you, with wyl, herte, & might
And euer hath don, sith ye fyrst hym knewe
That ye shall of your grace vpon hym rewe
And take hym for husbonde and for lorde
Lene me your hande, for this is our accorde
Let se nowe of your womanly pyte
He is a kynges brother sonne parde
And though he were a poore bachelere
Syn he hathe serued you so many a yere
And had for you so great aduersyte
It muste ben considered, leueth me
For gentle mercy ought to passen ryght.
Than sayde he thus to Palamon the knight
I trowe there nede lytell sarmonyng
To make you assenten to this thing
Cometh nere, & taketh your lady by ꝑ honde
Bytwyxt hem was maked anon the bonde
That hyght matrimony or mariage
By al the counsayle of the baronage
And thus with al blysse and melodye
Hath Palamon ywedded Emelye.
And god that al this world hath wrought
Send hym his loue, ꝑ it hath so dere bought
For now is Palamon in all wele
Lyuyng in blysse, in richesse, and in hele
And Emely hym loueth so tenderly
And he her serueth so gentelly
That neuer was there no word hem bitwene
Of ielousye, or of any other tene
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye
And god saue al this fayre companye.

Here endeth the knyghtes tale, and here foloweth the Mylers prologue.

WHā ꝑ the knight had thus his tale ytolde
In al ꝑ cōpany nas there yong ne olde
That he ne sayd, it was a noble story
And worthy to be drawen in memory
And namely the gentyls euerychone
Our host loughe and swore, so mote I gone
This gothe a right, vnbokled is the male
Let se nowe who shall telle an other tale
For truely, the game is well begonne
Now telleth sir monke if ye conne
Somwhat, to quyte with the knyghtes tale
The Myller for dronken was al pale
So that vnnethes vpon his horse he satte
He nolde auale neyther hood ne hatte
Ne abyde no man for his curtesye
But in Pylates voyce he began to crye
And swore by armes, blode, and bones
I can a noble tale for the nones (tale
With which I wol now quite ꝑ knight hys
Our host sawe that he was dronken of ale
And sayd: abyde Robyn leue brother
Some better man shall telle vs first an other
Abyde, and let vs worthe thrifftely.
By gods soule (quod he) that wol not I
For I wol speke, or elis go my way
Our hoste answerde: tel on a deuelway
Thou arte a foole, thy wit is ouercome
Now herkeneth quod the myller, al & some
But fyrst I make protestacion
That I am dronke, I know it by my soun

And

nd therfore yf I mispeake or say
rite it the ale of Southwarke, I you pray
for I will tell a legende and a lyfe
Both of a carpenter and hys wyfe
howe that a clerke set a wryghtes cappe
The Reue answerde & sayd stynt thy clap
Let be thy lewd dronken harlotry
It is a synne, and eke a greate foly
To apayren any man, or hym defame
nd eke to bryng wyues in suche blame
Thou mayst ynough of other thynges sayn.
Thys dronken myller spake full sone agayn
nd sayd: leue brother Oswolde
Who hath no wyfe is no cokolde
But I say not therfore that thou art one
There ben full good wyues many one
why art thou angry with my tale now
I haue a wyfe parde, as well as thou
et nolde I for all the oren in my plough
Take vpon me more than ynough
To demen of my selfe that I am one
I will beleue that I am none
An husbande shoulde not ben inquisityfe
Of goddes priuete, ne of his wife
for so he fynde goddes foyson there
Of the remnaunt, nedeth not to enquere
What shuld I more say, but this millere
e nolde his worde for no man forbere
But tolde his chorles tale in thys manere
Me forthinketh I shall reherce it here
nd therfore, euery gentle wight I pray
emeth not for goddes loue, that I say
Of yuel entent, but that I more reherce
er tales al, ben they better or werce
reis falsen some of my matere
nd therfore, who so lyst it not to here
Turne ouer the lefe, and chose another tale
for ye shall fynde ynowe great and smale
Of historial thing, that toucheth gentilnesse
nd eke moralite, and holynesse
Blame not me, yf that ye chose amys
The Myller is a chorle, ye knowe wel thys
So was the Reue eke, and other mo
nd harlotry they tolde eke both two
Lyfe you, and put me out of blame
nd eke men shuld not make ernest of game.

Here endeth the Millers pro-
logue: and here after fo-
loweth his tale.

Whylom ther was dwel-
ling in Orenforde
A riche gnofe, ỹ gestes
helde to borde
And of his craft he was
a carpenter
Wyth hym there was
dwellyng a poze scoler
had ylerned art, but all hys fantasye
Was turned to lerne astrologye
And conde certayne of conclusions
To demen by interrogations
If that men asken hym in certayne houres
Whan ỹ men shuld haue drought or shoures
Or yf men asked hym what should befall
Of euery thyng, I may not reken all
Thys clerke was cleped hende Nycholas
Of derne loue he conde and of solas
And therto he was slye and right priue
And ylyke to a mayden meke to se
A chambze he had in that hostelry
Alone, withouten any company
Ful fetously dight with herbes sote
And he hym selfe as swete as is the rote
Of lycozes, or of any cyprewale
His almagiste, and bokes great and smale
His astrelagour, longyng for hys arte
Hys augrym stones lyeng fayze apartie
On shelues couched at hys beddes heed
Hys presse yeouered with a foldyng reed
And all aboue there lay a gay sautrye
On whiche he made on nyghtes melodye
So swetely, that all the chambze rong
And Angelus ad virginem he song
And after that he songe the kynges note
Full ofte blyssed was hys mery throte
And thus the swete clerke hys tyme spente
After his frendes fyndyng and his rente.
This carpenter had wedded newe a wife
Whiche that he loued more than his lyfe
Of eyghtene yere she was of age
Jelous he was, and kept her strayte in cage
for she was wyld, and yonge: & he was olde
And demed hymselfe to ben a cokewolde
He knewe not Cato: for his wife was rude
That bade men wed her semblitude
Men shoulde wedde after her estate
for youth and elde is often at debate
But syth he was fallen in the snare
He must enduren, as other folke his care
Fayze was thys yong wyfe, & therwithal
As any wyesele her body gentle and small
A sceyne she wered, barred all with sylke

Jbarme clothe, as white as morowe mylke
Upon her lendes, full of many a goze
Whitwas her smock, ¶ embrouded al bifore
And eke behynde on her colere aboute
Of cole blacke silke, within and eke without
The tapes of her white voluper
were of the same sute of her colere
Her silet bright of silke, and sit full hye
And sikerly, she had a lykerous eye
Ful smale ypulled were her browes two
And they were bent, and blacke as any slo
She was mochel more blisful for to se
Than is the newe perjenet tre
And softer than the wolle is of a wether
And by her girdel heng a purse of lether
Tasseld with silke, and perled with latoun
In al this world, to seken vp and doun
There nys no man so wyse, ¶ couthe thenche
So gay a popelote, or so gay a wenche
Ful brighter was the shyning of her hewe
Than in the towre the noble forged newe
But of her song, it was so loude ¶ yerne
As any swalowe sytting on a berne
Therto she couthe skippe, ¶ make game
As any kydde or calfe folowing his dame
Her mouth was swete, as bragot or ¶ mede
Ful of the hole of appres, lyeng in her bedde
Wynsing she was, as is a joly colte
Long as a mast, and vpright as a bolte
A brooche she bare on her lowe collere
As brode as the bosse of a bucklere
Her shoes were laced on her leggers hye
She was a primerole, and a pigges nye
For any lorde to lygge in his bedde
Or yet for any good yoman to wedde.
¶ Now sir and eke sire, so befel the cas
That on a day this hende Nicholas
Fel with this yonge wyfe to rage and pley
Whyle that her husbonde was at Oseney
As clerkes ben ful subtil and queynte
And prively he caught her by the queynte
And sayd: I wyl but I have my wyll
Or elles I wyl telle thy lorde anon
And helde her fast by the hanche bones
And sayd: lemman love me wel at ones
Or I wol dyen also god me save
And she sprange as a colte in a trave
And with her heed she wryth fast away
And sayd: I wol not kysse the by my fay
Why let be quod she, let be Nicholas
Or I wol crye out harrowe and alas
Do way your handes for your curtesye.
This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye
And spake so fayre, ¶ profered hym so fast
That she her love graunted hym at last
And swore her ooth, by saynt Thomas of Kent
That she would ben at his comaundement
Whan that she may her leyser wel aspye
Thy husbande is so ful of jelousye
That but ye wayte wel, and be prive
I wote right wel I nam but dede, quod she
Ye moste be ful derne as in this cas
Nay therof care ye nat, quod Nycholas
A clerke had litherly biset his whyle
But yf he couth a carpenter bigyle
And thus they were accorded, and ysworen
To a wayte a tyme as I have sayd before
And whil Nycholas had don this carpenter
And thanked her about the lendes wele
He kyssed her swete, and taketh his sawtry
And playeth fast, and maketh melody
Than fel it thus, that to the parysshe cherche
(Christes owne werkes for to werche)
This good wyf wente vpon an holy day
Her forheed shone as bryght as any day
So was it wasshe, whan she fro her werke
Now was there of that churche a parysh clerke
The which that was clepyd Absolon
Crulle was his heare, ¶ as golde he shon
And strouted as a fanne large and brode
Ful straught and even lay his joly shode
His rode was reed, his eyen gray as gose
With Powles wyndowes corven on his shoes
In hosen reed he went ferously
Ylyke he was ful smale and propurely
All in a kyrtle of lyght waget
Ful fayre and thicke bedyn the pleytes fet
And therupon he had a gay surplys
As whyte as is the blosme on the rys
A mery chylde he was, so god me save
Wel couthe he let blood, shape, and shave
And make a charter of londe, ¶ a quytaunce
In many maner couthe he trippe ¶ daunce
After the scole of Oxenforde tho
And with his leggres casten to and fro
And play songes on a smale rybybe
Therto he songe somtyme a loude quynible
And as wel couthe he play on a gyterne
In all the towne nas brewhous ne taverne
That he ne visited with his solas
Ther any gay tapstere was
But sothe to say he was somwhat squaymous
Of farting, and of speche daungerous
¶ This Absolon, that was ioly and gay
Goth with a censer on the sonday
Censing the wyues of the parisshe faste

And many a louely loke on hem he caste
And namely on this carpenters wife
To loke on her him thought a mery lyfe
She was so propre, and swete as ypotaine
I dare wel sayne if she had ben a mous
And he a catte, he wolde haue her bente anon.
This parysshe clerke, this ioly Absolon
Hath in his herte suche a loue longyng
That of no wife toke he none offeryng
For eueryche he sayd he wold none
The moone, whan it was night bright shone
And Absolon his gyterne hath ytake
For paramoures he thought for to wake
And forth he goth, iolous and amerous
Tyl he came to the carpenters hous
A litel after the cocke had yerowe
And dressed him by a shot wyndowe
That was vpon the carpenters wall
He syngeth in his voyce gentyl & small
Now dere lady, if thy wil be
I pray you that ye wolde rewe on me
Ful wel accordyng to his gyterning.
¶ This carpenter awoke, & herde him syng
And spake vnto his wife anon
What Alison, herest thou not Absolon
That chaufeth thus vnder our bowres wal
And she answerde her husbonde there wyth al
Yes dere brother, I here him euery dele
This passeth forth, what wel ye her this wele
Fro day to day, this ioly Absolon
For loue of her, that him was wo bygon
He walketh all the night, and al the day
He kembeth his lockes broade, & made him gay
He wendeth her by mennes and by gage
And specially, for loue he wolde her sewe
He syngeth brekyng as a nyghtyngale
He semeth her pyment, meth, and spyced ale
And wyne of pyryte, morre, and spyced ale
And wafres pypyng hote out of the glede
& for the wife of heuen, he preferred her mede
For some folke wol be wonne for rychesse
And some for strokes, & some to gentylnesse.
Sometyme to shewe his lyghtnesse & maystrye
He playeth Herodes on a scaffolde hye
But what auayleth him, as in this case
For lourth she this hende Nycholas
That Absolon may blowe y bukkes horne
For me had for his labour but a scorne
And thus she maketh Absolon her ape
And al his reuerence turneth to a iape
For euerich this prouerbe it is no lye
Men say ryght thus alway, the nye slye
Maketh the ferre loue to be lothe
For though y Absolon be wode or wrothe
By cause that he ferre was from her syght
Thus nye Nycholas stode in his syght.
But now beare the wel hende Nycholas
For Absolon may wayle and syng alas
And so byfel it on a saterday
This carpenter was gone to Oseney
And hende Nicholas and Alison
Accorded were to this conclusion
That Nicholas shuld shapen him a wyle
This ielyous carpenter to begyle
And if so be the game wente a right
She shuld slepe in his armes al nyght
For this was his desyre and hers also
And right anon, without wordes mo
This Nycholas no lenger wolde tarye
But doth ful softe vnto his chambre carye
Both meate & drinke, for a day or two
And to her husbonde bade her for to go
If that he asked after Nicholas
She shuld say she wist where he was
Of al that day she sawe him not with eye
She trowed he was in some maladye
For no cry that her mayde coude call
He nolde answere, for naught y might befall
¶ Thus passeth forth al the day saterday
That Nicholas shyt in his chambre lay
And ete, dranke, & slepe, & did what him lyste
Tyl somdeal, y the sonne gooth to reste.
¶ This ielyous carpenter hath gret anoye manyfolde
Of Nycholas, or what thing might him holde
And said: I am a drad by our lady Thomas
It standeth not aryght with Nycholas
God shylde that he dyed sodaynly
This wordes he spake ful pytously
I saw to day a cors borne to chyrche
That now on monday last I saw him werche
Go vp quod he vnto his knaue anone
Clepe at his dore, & knocke ful with a stone
Loke how it is, and tel me boldely.
¶ This knaue wente vp ful hardely
And at the chambre dore, whyle y he stode
He cried and knocked as he were wode
Alas how, what do ye maister Nicholaye
How may ye slepe al this longe daye
But al for nought, he herde not a worde.
An hole he found ful low vpon a borde
There as the catte was wont in to crepe
And at that hole he loked in ful depe
And at the last he had of him a syght.
¶ This Nycholas sate ever gapyng vpright
As he had kyked on the newe mone
Adowne he gothe, & tolde his maister sone
In what aray he sawe this ylke man.

¶ This carpenter to blyssen him began
And sayd: now helpe vs seynt Fridesswyde
A man wot lytle what shal him betyde
This man is fallen, with his Astronomye
In some woodnesse, or in some agonye
I thought aye well howe it shulde be
Men shulden not know of Gods pryuete
Ye blessed be alway the lewde man
That naught but onely his byleue can.
Right so ferde an other clerke w astronomy
He walked into the feldes for to pry
Upon the sterre, to wete what shuld befall
Tyl he was in a marlpyt yfall
He saw not that, yet by saynte Thomas
Me reweth sore on hynde Nycholas
He shal be arated out of his studyeng
If that I may, by Jesus heuen kyng.
Get me a staffe, that I maye vnderspore
While that thou Robyn heuest vp the dore
He shal out of his studyeng, as I gesse
And to the chamber dore he gan him dresse
His knyue was a stronge carle for the nones
And by the haspe bare vp the dore at ones
Into the floore the dore fell anone.
¶ This Nicholas sate as styl as any stone
And euer gaped vpward in to the eyre.
This carpenter wend he were in dispeyre
And hente him by the shulders mightyly
And shoke him harde, and cryed spytously
What Nycholas, what howe loke adowne
Awake, and thinke on Christes passyon
I crouche þ frō elues, & frō wicked wightes
Therwith the nightspel he said anon rightes
On four halues, of the house aboute
And on the dresshfolde of the dore without
Jesu Christ, and saynte Benedight
Blysse this house from euery wycked wight
For the nyghtes mare the wyte Pater noster
Where wonnest thou saynt Peters suster.
¶ And at the laste this hende Nycholas
Gan for to syke sore, and said alas
Shal al this worlde be lost efte sones nowe.
This carpēter answerd: what sayst thou
What thinke on god, as we do mē þ swynke
This Nicholas answerd: fetche me drinke
And after wol I speke in priuete
Of certayne thynges, that toucheth the & me
I wol tellen it none other man certaine.
This carpēter goth down, & cometh againe
And brought of nyghtes ale a large quarte
And whā þ eche of hem had dronkē his parte
This Nycholas, his doze fast shette
And downe the carpenter by him sette
And sayd: Johan hoste myn lefe and dere
Thou shalte vpon thy trouthe swere me here
That to no wight þ shalt my counsell wrey
For it is Christes counsayle that I say
And if thou tel it any man, thou art forlore
For thys vengeaūce thou shalt haue therfore
That if thou wrayest me, thou shalt be woode.
¶ Nay Christ it forbyd for his holy bloode
Quod tho this selye man, I am no bladde
Ne though I say it, I am not lefe to gabbe
Say what thou wolte, I shal it neuer tell
To child ne wyfe, by him that harowed hell.
Now John (quod Nicholas) I wol not lye
I haue yfounden in myne astrologye
As I haue loked in the moone bryght
That now on monday next, at quarter nyght
Shal fall a rayne, & that so wyld and woode
That halfe so great was neuer Noes floode
This worlde (he said) in lesse than in an houre
Shal al be drenyte, so hydous is the shoure
Thus shal mankynde drenche, & lese her lyfe.
This carpēter answerd & said: alas mi wife
And shal she drenche? Alas myn Alysoun
For sorow of this he fel almoste adoun
And said: is there no remedye in this caas?
Yes yes ful good (quod hende Nycholas)
If thou wolt werche after lore and rede
Thou maist not werchē after thyn owen hede
For thus saith Salomon, þ was ful trewe
Worke al by cōsayle, & thou shalte not rewe.
And if thou wilt werken by good counsayle
I undertake, without maste or sayle
Yet shal I saue her, and the and me.
Hast thou not herde how saued was Noe?
Whan þ our lord had warned him byforne
That al the worlde with water shuld be lorne
Yes (quod the carpenter) ful yore a go.
¶ Hast thou not herde (quod Nicholas) also
The sorow of Noe with his fyrthyfte
Or that he myght gete his wife to shyppe
Him had leuer, I dare wel undertake
At thilke tyme, than al his wethers blake
That she had a shyp her selfe alone
And therfore wost thou what is best to done?
This asketh haste, and of an hasty thyng
Men may not preche ne make tarying
Anon go get vs faste in to this inne
A kneding trowe or elis a kemelyn
For eche of vs, but loke that they ben large
In which men mowe swymme as in a barge
And haue therin vitayles suffysiante
But for a day, fye on the remenante
The water shal aslake and gon away

About

houte prime vpon the next day
But Robyn may not weten of this thy knaue
Ne eke thy maide Gille, I may not saue
Aske not why: for though thou aske me
I wol not tel goddes priuete
Suffiseth the, but if thy wittes be madde
To haue as great a grace as Noe hadde
Thy wyfe shall I wel saue out of doute
Go now thy way, and spede the here aboute
But whan thou hast for her, & the, and me
Ygetten vs these knedyng tubbes three
Than shalt thou hange hem in ỳ rofe full hye
That no man of our purueyaunce espye
And whā ỳ hast don thus as I haue sayde
And hast our vitayle fayre in hem layde
And eke an are to smyte the corde a two
Whan ỳ the water cometh, that we maye go
And breake an hole on hye vpon the gable
Into the garden warde, ouer the stable
That we may frely passen forth our way
Whan that the great shoure is gon away
Thā shal ỳ swym as mery I vndertake
As doth the white ducke after her drake
Than wol I clepe, how Alyson, howe Iohn
Be mery: for the floode wol passe anon
And thou wolt sain, hayle maister Nicholay
Good morow: for I se wel that it is day
And than we shal be lordes al our lyfe
Of all the worlde, as was Noe and his wife
But of one thynge I warne the ful right
Be wel auysed on that ylke nyght
That we bene entred into the shyppes borde
That none of vs ne speke not a worde
Ne clepe ne crye, but ben in his prayere
For it is goddes owne heste dere.
Thy wife & thou mote hange fer a twynne
For that bytwyxt you shall be no synne
No more in lokyng than there shal in dede
This ordynaunce is sayd, go god the spede
To morow at night, whan men ben al a slepe
In to our knedyng tubbes wol we crepe
And sytten there, abydyng goddes grace
Go now thy way, I haue no lenger space
To make of this no lenger sermonyng
Men sayn thus: send the wyse, & say nothing
Thou art so wyse, it nedeth the not to teche
Go saue our lyues, and that I the beseche.
This sely carpenter goth forth hys way
Ful ofte he sayd alas, and welaway
And to his wyfe he tolde his priuete
And she was ware, and knewe it bet than he
That al this queynte cast was for to sey
But natheles, she ferde as she wolde dey
And sayd: alas, go forth thy way anone
Helpe vs to skape, or we be dede echone
I am thy trewe verey wedded wife
Go dere spouse, and helpe to saue our lyfe.
Lo, whiche a great thing is affection
Men may dye of ymagination
So depe may impression be take.
This sely carpenter begynneth to quake
Him thynketh verily that he may se
Noes flodde come walwyng as the see
To drenchen Alyson, his hony dere
He wepeth, wayleth, and maketh sory chere
He syketh, with many a sory thought
He goth, & getteth him a knedyng trough
And after a tubbe, and a kemelyn
And priuely he sent hem to his in
And hynge hem in the rofe ful priuely
His owne hand, he made him ladders three
To clymben by the ronges, & by the stalkes
Into the tubbes hongyng by the balkes
And hem vitayled, both trough and tubbe
With breed and chese, & good ale in a tubbe
Suffisyng right ynowe, as for a day
But er that he had made all this aray
He sent his knaue, & eke his wenche also
Vpon his nede to London for to go
And on the monday, whan it drowe to nyght
He shette his doore, without candel lyght
And dressed al thing, as it shulde be
And shortly clomben vp all thre
They seten styll not fully a forlonge way
Now pater noster clom, sayd Nycolay
And clum quod Johā, & clum said Alyson
This carpenter said his deuocion
And stylle he sytte, and bydderh his prayere
Awayting on the rayne, if he it here.
The deed slepe, for wery besynesse
Fel on this carpenter, right as I gesse
About curfewe tyme, or lytell more
For trauayle of his goste he groneth sore
And eft he roureth, for his heed myslay
And downe of ỳ ladder thā stalketh Nycolay
And Alyson ful softe after the spredde
Without wordes mo they went to bedde
There as the carpenter was wont to lye
There was the reuel, and the melodye
And thus lieth Alyson and Nycholas
In besynesse of myrthe and solas
Tyl that the bel of lauder gan to ringe
And freres in the chaunsell gon to synge.
This parisshe clerke, this amerous Absolō
That is for loue alway so wo bygon
Vpon the monday was at Oseney

With company, him to dispoyte and play
And aske vpon a case a cloistere
Ful priuely, after John the carpentere
And he drewe him a parte out of the chirche
And said I not: I sawe him not here wirche
Sithe saturday, I trowe that he be went
For tymbre, there our Abbot hath him sent
For he is wont for tymbre for to go
And dwellen at the graunge a day or two
Or elis he is at his house certayne
Where that he be, I can not sothly saine.
This Absolon, ful ioly was and lyght
And thought, now is mi time to walk al night
For sekerly, I sawe him nat sterying
About his doore, sith day began to springe
So mote I thriue, I shal at cockes crowe
Ful priuely knocke at his windowe
That stant full lowe vpon his bowres wall
To Alyson wol I nowe tellen all
My loue longyng: for yet I shall nat mysse
That at the leest way I shall her kysse
Some maner comforte shall I haue parfaye
My mouth hath itched al this long daye
That is a sygne of kyssyng at the leest
Al nyght me mette eke, that I was at a feest
Therfore I wol go slepe an hour or tweye
And all the nyght than wol I walke & pleye.
Whan that the first cocke hath crow anon
Vp rysse this ioly louer Absolon
And him arayeth gay, and in queynte deuyce
But first he cheweth greyns and lycorice
To smellen swete, or he had kempte his here
Vnder his tonge a trueloue he bere
For therby he wende to ben gracyouse
He cometh to the carpenters house
And stylle he stante vnder the shot wyndowe
Vnto his brest it raught, it was so lowe
And softe he knocked, with a semly soun.
What do ye honycombe, swete Alysoun
My faire birde, my swete synamome
Awaketh lemman myn, and speketh to me
Ful wel thinken ye vpon my wo
That for youre loue I swelt there as I go
No wonder is though I swelt & swete
I mourne as doth the lambe after the tete
Wys lemman, I haue suche loue longyng
That lyke a turtle trewe is my mournyng
I may not eaten no more than may a maide
Go fro the wyndow iacke foole, she sayde
As helpe me god and swete sainte Jame
I loue a nother, or elis I were to blame
Wel bet than thee by Jesu Absolon
Go forthe thy way, or I wol caste a stone
And let me slepe, a twenty deuel way.
Alas quod Absolon, and welaway
That true loue was euer so yuel bystette
Than kysse me, syn it may be no bette
For Jesus loue, and for the loue of me.
Wilt thou than go thy way therwith quod she
Ye certes lemman, quod this Absolon
Than make the redy (quod she) I come anon
And vnto Nycholas she sayd styll
Now peace, & thou shalt laughe thy fyll
This Absolon down set him vpō his knees
And sayd: I am a lorde at al degrees
For after this, I hope there cometh more
Lemman thy grace, & swete byrde thy nowe.
The window she vndoth, & that in haste
Haue do (quod she and spede the faste
Let not our neyghbours the aspye.
This Absolō gan wype his mouth ful drye
Derke was the nyght, as pytche or cole
And at the wyndow she put out her ers hole
And Absolon him felte, neyther bet ne wers
But with his mouthe he kyste her bare ers
Ful sauorly, or he were ware of this.
Abacke he sterte, & thought it was amys
For wel he wyste, a woman had no berde
He felte a thyng al rowe, and longe herde
And sayd: fye, alas what haue I do?
Te he quod she, & clapte the wyndowe to
And Absolon gothe forthe a sory paas
A berde a berde, said hende Nycholas
By goddes corpus, this gothe fayre & weie.
This sely Absolon herde it euery dele
And on his lyppe he gan for angre byte
And to him selue he said, I shal the quite
Who rubbeth now, who frotteth now his lips
With dust, with sonde, with straw, with chyps
But Absolon, that saith ful often alas
My soule betake I to Sathanas
But me were leuer than al this town, quod he
Of this dispite auenged for to be.
Alas quod he alas that I ne had ybleynt
His hotte loue is colde, and all queynt
For fro the tyme that he had kyste her ers
Of paramours he set not a kers
For he was heled of his maladye
Ful ofte paramoures he gan defye
And wepe as doth a chylde that is ybets
A softe pace he wente ouer the strete
Vnto a smyth, men callen dan Gerueys
That in his forge smiteth plowe harneys
He sharpeth shares, and culters besyly
This Absolon knocketh all easily
And said vndo Gerueys, and that anon
What

¶ What who art thou? It am I Absolon
What Absolon, what for Christes swete tre
why ryse ye so rathe ey benedicite
what eyleth you lõe gay gyrle god it wote
hath brought you thus on the berytote
by saynte note, ye wote wel what I mene.
¶ This Absolon ne raught not a bene
Of al his play, no word againe he gaffe
he had more towe on his distaffe
Than Gerveys knewe, a sayd frend so dere
The hote cultre, in the chymeney here
As lene it me, I haue therewith to done
I woll bringe it the agayne ful sone.
¶ Gervays answered: certes were it golde
Or in a poke nobles al vntolde
Thou shuldest it haue, as I am true smyth
eye Christes fote, what wol ye don therwith
Therof (quod Absolon) be as be may
I shall wel tellen the by to morowe day
And caught the culter by the colde stele
ful softe out at the dore gan he stele
And went vnto the carpenters wall
he coughed first, & knocked there withall
Upon the wyndowe, right as he dyd ere.
¶ This Alyson answerd: who is there
That knocketh so? I warante he is a thefe.
Why nay (quod he) god wot my swete lefe
I am thyn Absolon, thyn owne derlyng
Of gold (quod he) I haue the bronght a ryng
My mother yaue it me, so god me saue
ful fyne it is, and therto wel ygraue
This wol I yeue the, if thou me kysse.
This Nycholas was ryssen for to pysse
And thought he wolde amenden all the iape
he shulde kysse his ers er that he skape
And vp the wyndowe dyd he hastely
And out his ers he put ful priuely
And ouer the buttocke, to the haunche boon
And therwith spake this clerke, this Absolon
Spcke swete birde, I not where thou arte.
¶ This Nycholas anon let flerne a farte
As great as it had ben a thunder dent
That with the stroke he was wel nyghe blent
And he was redy with his yron hote
And Nycholas in the arse he smote.
Of gothe the skyn an hondbrede aboute
The hote culter brende so his toute
And for the smerte he wende for to dye
As he were woode, he gan for to crye
Helpe, water, water, for goddes herte.
This carpenter out of his slomber sterte
And herde one crye water, as he were woode
And thought, alas now comth Noes floode
And sette him vp without wordes mo
And with an axe, he smote the corde a two
And downe goth al, he soude neither to sell
Bredene ale, but downe shortly he fell
Upon the flore, and there a swowne he lay.
¶ Up sterte than Alyson & hende Nycholay
And cryed out, and harrowe in the strete
The neyghbours, both smal and grete
In ronne, for to gauren on this man
That a swoune lay, pale and wan
For with that fall brosten hath he his arme
But stonden he muste vnto his owne harme
For whan he spake, he was yborne adoun
With hende Nycholas, and Alisoun
They tolde euery man, that he was woode
He was agaste so of Noes floode
Through fantasye, that of his vanite
He had getten him knedynge tubbes three
And had hem honged in the rofe aboue
And that he prayed hem for goddes loue
To sytten in the roofe par compayne
The folke gan laughen at his fantasye
And in to the roofe they kyken and they gape
And turned al his ernest into a iape
For what so this carpenter answerde
It was for naught, no man his reason herde
With othes great, he was yswore aboune
That he was holden wood in al that toune
For euerych clerke anon bridde with other
They sayd y man was wod, my leue brother
And euery wyght gan laughen at this strife.
¶ Thus swyued was the carpenters wyfe
For al his kepyng, and his ielousye
And Absolon hath kyst her nether eye
And Nicholas is skalded in the toute
This tale is done, & god saue al the route.

¶ Here endeth the Millers tale:
and hereafter folowyth the
Reues prologue.

WHã folke had laughed at this nyce caas
Of Absalon and hynd Nicholas
Dyuers folke dyuersly they sayde
But for the more part they lough & playde
Ne at this tale I sawe no man him greue
But it were onely Oswolde the Reue
Bycause he was of carpenters crafte
A lytel yre in his herte yclafte
He gan to grutchen and blamen it a lyte

Sothly quod he, ful wel conthe I ꝑ quyte
With bierying of a ꝑonde mylers eye
If that me lyst to speke of rybaudrye
But ek I am old, me lust not play for age
Grasse tyme is done, my fodder is forage
This white toppe writeth myn olde yeres
For ſórtune yolow was, now white ben myn
But yet I fare as doth an open ers (heres
That yike frute is euer lenger the wers
Tyl it be rotten in mollokr, or in stre
We olde men I drede so fare we
Tyl we be rotten can we not be rype
We hoppen alway, whyle the world wol pype
For in our wyl there stykerth euer a nayle
To haue an hore herd and a grene tayle
As hath a leke, for though our myght be gone
Our wyl desyreth folye euer in one
For whil we may not don, thó wol we spekrn
Yet in our asshen olde, is fyre yleken.
Foure gyftes han we, which I shal deuyse
Auauntyng, lyenge, angre, and couetyse
These foure sparkles longen vn to elde
Our olde lymmes mowe wel ben vnwelde
But wyl ne shall not fayle, that is sothe,
And yet haue I alway a coltes tothe
As many a yere as it is passed henne
Syn that my tappe of lyfe began to renne
For sikerly, whan I was borne anone
Death drow the tappe of lyfe, and let it gone
And euer syns hath the tappe ryonne
Tyl that almost al empty is the tonne
The streme of lyfe now droppeth on ꝑ thombe
The syl tonge may wel ringe and chymbe
Of wrecchednes, that passed is ful yore
With olde folke, saue dotage is no more.
Whã ꝑ our host had herde this sermoning
He gan to speke as lordly as a kyng
And sayd, what amounteth al this wytte
What shal we speke all day of hooly wryttes
The deuyl made a Reue to pleye
Or a fouter a shyppman, or a leche.
Say forth thy tale, and tary not the time
Lo Depford, and it is half way prime
Lo Grenewyche, that many a shrewe is in
It were tyme thy tale for to begyn
Nowe sirs quod this Oswolde the Reue
I pray you al, that ye not you greue
Thó I answere, and somdele set his houte
For leful is with force, force of thoute.
This dronken myller hath ryolde vs here
Howe that begyled was a carpentere
Parauenture in shame, for ſ one
And by your leue, I shal him quyte anon
Right in his chorles termes wol I speke
I pray to god his nekke mote breke
He can wel in mine eye seme a balke
But in his owne he can not seme a balke.

Here endeth the Reues ꝓlogue.

Here begynneth the Reues tale.

AT Trompyngton, not fer fro Cambrydge
There goth a broke, and ouer that a bridge
Upon the whiche brok there stant a mell
And thus is very sooth, as I you tell
A myller was there dwellyng many a day
As any pecok he was ꝓoude and gay
Pypen he couthe, and fysshen, and nettes bete
And turne cuppes, and well wrastle and shete
Ay by his belte he bare a longe panade
And of a swerde ful trenchaunt was the blade
A lady popere barre he in his pouche
There nas no man for peryl dorst him touche
A Sheffelde thwytel barre he in his hose
Round was his face, and camysed was his nose
As pyled as an ape was his skull
He was a market beter at the full
There durst no wyght hondes on him legge
That he ne swore he shulde abegge
Ytherr he was forsothe, of corne and mele
And that a ly, and bisten for to stele
His name was hoten deynous Symkyn
A wyfe he had, cosyn of nobil kyn
The ꝑsson of the toune her fader was
With her he ꝓyde ful many a panne of bras
For that Symkyn shulde in his blode alye
She was ꝓoured in a nonnerye
For Symkyn wolde no wyfe, as he sayde
But she were well ynorissched, and a mayde
To saue his estate of yomanrye
And she was ꝓoude, and pert as a pye
A ful fayre sight was it vpon hem two
On holy dayes byfore the wolde go
With his typet wounden aboute his herd
And she come after in a gyte of red
And Symkyn had hosen of the same
There durst no wyght clepen her but dame
Was none so hardy, that went by the way
That with her owne durst rage or playe
But

But yf he wouldbe slayne of Symkyn
With panade, or with knife, or bodkyn
For, ielous folkes ben perillous euermo
Algates they would her wyues wende so
And eke for she was somdele smoterlyche
She was as dygne as water in a dyche
And as full of hoker, and of besmare
As though that a lady shoulde her spare
What for her kynred, and her noterlye
That she had lerned in the nonnerye.
¶ A doughter had they bytwixt hem two
Of twenty yere, withouten any mo
Sauyng a child þ was of halfe yere of age
In cradell it lay, and was a proper page
This wenche thicke & well ygrowen was
With camefyd nose, and eyen gray as glas
With buttockes brode, & brestes round & hye
But right faire was her heer I wol nat lye
The person of þ town, for she was so fayre
In purpose was to maken her his heyre
Bothe of his catell, and of his mesuage
And straunge he made it of her mariage
His purpose was to bestowen her hye
Into some worthy blode of auncetrye
For holy churches good moste ben despended
On holy churches blode that is descended
Therfore he wolde, his holy blode honour
Though that he holy churche shuld devour.
¶ Gret soken hath this Miller out of dout
With horne and breth, of al the land about
And namely there was a gret colege
Ful nere adoun þ Soler hall of Cambrege
Ther was her whete & eke her malt ygroude
And on a day it happed in a stounde
Sik lay the Manciple, on a malady
Men wenden wel he shuld dye
For which this miller stale bothe whete & corn
An hundred tyme more than before
For ther before, he stale but curtesly
But now he was a theef outrageously
For which the warden chydde & made fare
But ther of set the Miller nat a tare
He craked, bosted, and swore it nas not so
Than were ther yonge poure scolers two
That dwelten in the hall, of whiche I say
Testif they were, and lusty for to play
And only for her myrthe, and her reuelry
Upon the warden busyly they cry
To yeue hem leaue, but a litel stounde
To gon to mylle, and se her corne ygrounde
And hardely they durst lay her nekke
The Miller shuld not stele hē half a pekke
Of corne by sleyght, ne by force hem reue

And at the last the warden yaue hem leue
Iohan hight that one, & Aleyn hight þ other
Of a town they were both, þ hight Strother
Farre in the North, can I nat tell where
This Aleyn maketh all redy his gere
And on a horse, the sacke he caste anon
Forth goth Aleyn the clerke, and also Iohn
With good swerde & bukeler by her syde
Iohan knewe the way, hym nedeth no gyde
And at the mil dore the sacke down he layth
¶ Aleyn spake first: al hayle Symkin sayth
How faren thy faire doughter, & thy wife
Aleyn welcom, quod Symken by my life
And Iohn also: how now what do ye here
By god Symond qd Iohn nede has no pere
Hym behoueth serue hymselfe þ has no swayn
Or elis he is a fole, as clerkes sayn
Our Manciple I hope he wyll be dede
With wo werkes ate the mangers in his hede
And therfore is I come, and eke Aleyn
To grynde our corne & carry it home agayn
I pray you spede vs hennes that we may
It shalbe done, quod Symken, by my fay
What wyll you don, whyle it is in hande
By god, right by the hopper wol I stande
Qd Iohn: I sen how gares the corn gothin
Yet sawe I neuer by my fader kyn
How that the hopper wagges to and fro
Aleyn answerde: Iohan wyle thou ga
Than wyll I be beneth by my crowne
And se how the mele falles adowne
Into the trough, that shalbe my disporte
Qd Iohn: in fay I may be one of your sorte
I is as yll a miller as is ye.
This Miller smyleth at her nicete
And thought al wys I can wel your game
Ye wene that no man may hem begyle
But by my thrift, yet shall I blere her eye
For all the sleyght in her philosophye
The more queynte clerkes that they make
The more wyll I stele when I take
In stede of flour yet wyl I geue hem bren
The gretest clerkes be not the wisest men
As whylom to the wolfe spake the Mare
Of all her art counter I not a tare
¶ Out at the dore he goeth ful prively
Whan that he sawe his time, subtelly
He loked up & down, tyll he had yfounde
The clerkes horse, ther as he stode ybounde
Behynde the Mylle, under a leefull
And to the horse he goth hym fayre and well
He strypped of the bridell ryght anon.
And when þ horse was loste, he gan to goon

Towarde the fen, there wylde mares ryme
And forth, ho wehe, through thicke & thinne
The Wyller goeth agayn, no word he sayd
But doth his note, & wt these clerkes playd
Til that her corne was fayre & well ygroũde
And when the meale was sacked & ybounde
This John goth out, & found her hors away
And gan to cry, harowe and welaway
Our horse is lost Aleyn for goddes benes
Step on thy fete man, come forth al atcues
Alas our warden has hys palfray lorne.
¶ Thys Aleyn all forgate both mele & corne
All was out of mynde hys husbondrye
What, whylke way is he gon, he gan to crye
The wyfe came leaping inward at a rẽne
She sayd alas, he goeth to the fenne
With wylde mares, as fast as he may go
Unthãke come on his hond, þ bonde hym so
And he that better shulde haue knit þ reine.
Alas qd John, Aleyn for Christes peyne
Lay down thy sworde, & I shal mine aswa
I is full swifte god wote as is a raa
By goddes sale he shal not skape vs bathe.
Why ne hadest thou put the capel in þ lathe.
Al heyle Aleyn by god thou is a fonne
¶ These sely clerkes han full fast yronne
Towarde the fenne Aleyn and eke John
And whã the Wyller sawe þ they wer a gon
He halfe a bushell of her flour hath take
And bad his wyfe knede it in a kake
He said, I trow the clerkes were aferde
Yet can a Wyller make a clerkes berde
For all her arte, yet let hem gon her way
Lo wher they gon, let the children play
They get hym not so lightly by my crowne
These sely clerkes rennen vp and downe
With kepe kepe, stella, warthereere
Ga whystle thou, and I shal kepe hym here
But shortly, tyl it was verey nyght
They couth not, thogh they did al her might
Her capell catche, he ranne away so faste
Tyll in a dyche they caught him at the laste.
¶ Wery and wete as beestes in the rayne
Cometh sely John, & with hi cometh Alayne
Alas (quod John) the day that I was borne
Nowe are we dryuen to harbem & to skorne
Our corne is stole, men will vs foles call
Bothe the warden, and our felowes all
And namely the Wyller, wayla way
Thus playneth Jhon, as he goeth by þ way
Towarde the mylle, & bayarde in his houde
The Wyller sittyng by the fyre he foude
For it was night, & ferther might they not
But for the loue of god they him besought
Of herbrough and ease, as for her peny.
¶ The Wyller sayd ayen, yf there ben any
Suche as it is, yet shall ye haue your parte
My house is streyte, but ye haue lerned arte
Ye can by argument make a place
A myle brode, of twenty foote of space
Let se nowe if this place may suffice
Or make it romer wt speche, as is your gyse
Now Symõd (said John) by saint cutberde
Aye is thou mery, & that is fayre answerde
I haue herd say, mẽ should take of two thinges
Swilke as he findes, or swilk as he bringes
But specially I pray the host dere
Get vs som meate & drinke, & make vs chere
And we will pay truely at the ful
With empty hond, men may no haukes tull.
Lo here our siluer redy for to spende.
The miller to the town his doughter sende
For ale and brede and rosted hem a goos
And boũd her hors he should no more go loos
And in his own chambre he made a bedde
With sheetes & with chalons fayre yspredde
Not from his own bedde, ten foote or twelue
His doughter had a bedde all by her selue
Right in the same chambre, by and by
It might be no bette, and the cause why.
Ther was no rowmer herborow in þ place
They soupẽ, & they spoken of mirth & solace
And dronken euer stronge ale at beste
Adout midnight went they to reste.
¶ Wel hath this Wyller vermished his heed
Full pale he was for dronken, & nothing reed
He galpeth, and he speketh through his nose
As he were in the quarke, or in the pose
To bedde he goeth, and with hym his wyfe
As any Jay was she light and iolyfe
So was her ioly whystell wel ywette
The cradell at the beddes fete was sette
To rocken, & to yeue the childe to sucke
And when þ dronken was al in the cruke
To bedde went the doughter right anon
To bedde goth Aleyn and eke John
Ther nas no more, hem neded no dwale
This myller hath so wisely bybbed ale
That as an horse he snorteth in his slepe
Ne of his tayle behynde he toke no kepe
His wyfe bare to hym a burdon well strong
Men might hem here route a furlong
The wenche routeth eke par compayny.
¶ Aleyn the clerke, that herd this melody
He poked on Jolan, & sayd: slepest thou
Herdst thou euer swylke a lange et nowe

Lo

Lo swylke a couplyng is yt wyrt hem all
A wylde fyre on her bodyes fall,
Who herde euer swylke a ferly thyng?
Ye, they shall haue the floure of yuell endyng
Al thys lange nyght tydes me no reste
But yet na force, all shalbe for the beste
For John (sayd he) as euer mote I thryue?
If that I may, yon wenche wol I swyue
Some esement hath law shapen vs
For Johan, there is a lawe that saith thus
That if a man in one poynte ben a greued
That in an other he shal be releued
Our corne is stolen, sothly it is no nay
And we haue had an yuell fyt to day
And syn I shall haue none amendement
Agayne my losse I wyll haue myn esement
By goddes sale, it shal none other be.
This Johan answerd: Alyn, auyse the
The myller is a perilous man, he sayde
And if that he out of his slepe abrayde
He myght don vs bath a vilonye.
Alyn answerd: I counte him not worth a flye
And vp he rest, & by the wenche he crept.
This wenche lay vpright, & fast slept
Tyl he sonye was, er she myght aspye
That it had ben to late for to crye
And shortly for to sayne, they were at on
Now play Alyn, for I woll speke of John.
This John lay styl a forlonge way or two
And to him selfe he maketh routh and wo
Alas quod he this is a wicked iape
Nowe may I say, I is but an ape
Yet hath my felowe somwhat for his harme
He hath the myllers doughter in hys arme
He auentred him, and hath his nede yspedde
And I lye as a draffe sacke in my bedde
And whan this iape is tolde another day
I shal be holde a dasse, or a cokeney
I wot aryse, and auntre me it by my fay
Unhardy is vnsely, thus men say.
And vp he rose, and softely he went
Unto the cradel, and in his arme it hent
And bare it softly to his beddes fete
Sone after the wyfe her routyng lete
And gan awake, and went her out to pysse
And came again, & gan the cradel mysse
And groped here & there, but she founde none
Alas (quod she) I had almost mysgone
I had almost gone to the clerkes bedde
Eye benedycite, than had I foule yspedde
And forth she goth, tyl she the cradel fonde
She groped alway further with her honde
And fond the bedde, & thought nat but good
Bycause that the cradell by it stode
And nist where she was, for it was derke
But fayre & well she crept in by the clerke
And lieth ful styl, & wold haue caught a slepe
Within a while this John the clerke vp lepe
And on this good wyfe he layd ful sore
So mery a fyt had she nought full yore
And pyked hard & depe, as he were madde
This ioly life haue these two clerkers ladde
Tyll that the thirde cocke began to sing
Alyn wax wery in the dawning
For he had swonken all the long nyght
And sayd, fare wel Malyn swete wyght
The day is comen, I may no lenger byde
But euermo, where so I go or ryde
I am thine owne clerke, so haue I hele.
Now dere lemman quod she go, fare wele
But or thou go, one thyng I woll the tell
When thou wendest homwarde by the mell
Right at the entre of the dore behynde
Thou shalt a cake of halfe a bushel fynde
That was ymaked of thyn owne mele
Whiche that I helpe my fyre to stele
And good lemman god the saue and kepe
And with ỳ worde she gan almost to wepe
Alyn vprist and thought er it dawe
He wolde go crepe in by his felawe
And found the cradell with his hande anon
By god thought he, al wrong haue I gon
My heed is totty of my swynke to nyght
That maketh me that I go not aryght
I wot wel ỳ by the cradell I haue mysse go
Here lieth the Myller and hys wife also
And forth he goeth on twenty deuyl way
Unto the bedde, there as the myller lay
He wende haue croped by his felowe John
And by the Miller he crepte in anon
And caught him by the necke, & soft he spake
And sayd: John, thou swynesherd awake.
For Christes soule, and here a noble game
For by that lorde, that called is seynt Jame
As I haue thryse in this shorte nyght
Swyued ỳ millers doughter bolt vpryght
Whyles thou hast, as a coward ben agaste.
Ye false harlot (quod the miller haste
A false traytour, false clerke (quod he)
Thou shalte be dede by goddes dignite
Who durst be so bolde to disparage
My doughter, that is come of suche linage
And by the throte bolle he caught Alayn
And he hym hente dispytously agayn
And on the nose he smote hym with his fest
Downe ran the blode stremе vpon his brest

And

And in the flore, with mouth & nose ybroke
They walowen, as doth pygges in a poke
And vp they gon, and downe ayene anon
Tyll that the Myller spurned on a stone
And downe he fell backwarde vpon his wife
That wyst nothyng of this nyce stryfe
For she was fall a slepe a lytell wyght
With John the clerke, ỹ waked had al night
And with the fall out of her slepe she brayde
Helpe holy crosse of Stomboline she sayd
In manus tuas, lorde to the I call
Awake Simonde, the fende is on me fall
My hert is broken, helpe I am but deed
There lieth one on my wombe & on my heed
Helpe Symkyn, for these false clerkes fight
This John sterte vp, as fast as euer he might
And graspeth by the walles to and fro
To fynde a staffe, and she sterte vp also
And knew the estres bet thē did this John
And by the wall she found a staffe anon
And saw a lytell shemering of a lyght
For at an hole in shone the mone bryght
And by that lyght she saw hem both two
But certeinly she wyst not who was who
But as she sey a whyte thing in her eye
And when she gan this whyte thing aspye
She wend the clerke had worne a voluper
And with ỹ staffe she drowe alway nat a ner
And wend haue hit this Aleyn at full
And smote the miller on the pyled skull
That down he gan, & cryed, harrowe I dye
These clerkes bete vs well & let hem lye
And aryseth hem, and tooke her horse anon
And eke her meale, and on her way they gon
And at the myll dore they toke her take
Of halfe a bushell floure, well ybake.

Thus is the proud myller well ybete
And hath lost the grendyng of the whete
And payd for the supper euery dele
Of Aleyn and of John, that bete hym wele
His wyfe is fowred, and his doughter als
Lo suche it is a myller to be fals
And therfore this prouerbe is full sothe
Hym dare not wel worne that wel dothe
A gylour shal hym self begyled be
And god that sitte in hye maieste
Saue al this company, grete and smale
Thus haue I quite the myller in his tale.

Here endeth the Reues tale, and here foloweth the Cokes prologue.

THe Coke of London whyle the Reue spake
For ioy he thought the clauder hym on the bake
Aha (quod he) for Christes passion
This Myller hath a sharpe conclusion
Vpon his argument of herbygage
Well sayd Salamon in his langage
Ne bring not euery man into thyn hous
For herbrowyng by nyght is perelous
Well ought a man auysed for to be
Whom that he brought into his priuete
I pray to god so yeue me sorowe and care
If euer sythen I highte Hodge of ware
Herd I miller bette vs erste awerke
Me had a tape of malice in the derke.
But god forbyd that we stynten here
And therfore yf ye vouchesafe to here
A tale of me, that am a poore man
I wol tell you as wel as I can
A lytell tape, that fell in our cyte.
Our hoste sayd, sir I graunt it the
Nowe tell on Rodger, loke that it be good
For many a pasty hast thou letten blood
And many a Iacke of Douer hast thou solde
That hath ben twyse hote and twyse colde
Of many a pilgrim hast thou Christes curst
For of thy perile yet fare they the worse
That they haue eaten with thy stoble goos
For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos
Nowe tell on gentle Rogere by thy name
But yet I pray the be not wroth for game
A man may say full sothe in game & play.
Thou sayst ful sothe qd Roger by my fay
But sothe play, quathe play, as ỹ flemig sayd
And therfore Henry Bayly by thy faith
Be thou not wroth, or we departen here
Though that my tale ben of an hostelere
But nathelesse, I wol not telle it yet
But er we part, ywys thou shalt be quite
And therwithall he lough and made chere
And sayd his tale, as ye shullen after here.

Here endeth the Cokes prologue, and here foloweth hys tale.

A prentise whilom dwelt in oure cite
And of the crafte of bo-
tayliers was he
Galyarde he was, as
goldfinch in ꝑ shawe
Brown as a berry, a pro
per short felawe
With lockes blacke, kemt full fetously
Daunce he couth full well and iolily
He was called Perkyn Reuelour
He was as full of loue and paramour
As is the hyue full of hony swete
Well was the wench with him might mete
At euery bridal would he singe and hoppe
He loued bette the tauernes than the shoppe
For when any rydyng was in chepe
Out of the shoppe thider would he lepe
Tyll that he had of all the sight yseyn
And daunced wel, he would not come ageyn
And gather hym a meyny of his sorte
To hoppe and synge, and make such disporte
And there they sette steuen for to mete
To playen at the dyse in suche a strete
For in the cyte nas there no prentyse
That fayrer couth caste a payre of dyse
Than Perkyn couth, and thereto he was free
Of his dispence, in place of pryuyte
That found his mayster well in his chaffare
For ofttymes he founde his bore full bare
For sykerly, a prentyse reuelour
That haunteth dyse, ryot, or paramour
His mayster shall it in his shoppe abye
Al haue he no parte of the mynstralcye
For theft and ryotte, they ben conuertyble
Al can he play on getteren or on rebible
Reuell and ryotte, as in lowe degree
They ben fall wyfe the al day, as men may se
This ioly prentyse, with his maister abode
Tyll he were nye out of his prentyshode
Save he was ybbed bothe early and late
And sothtyme lefte with reuelers Newgate
But at the last, his maister him bethought
Upon a day, when he his paper sought
Of a prentyse, that sayeth this same worde
Wel bette is rotten apple out of horde
Than that it rote all the remnaunt
So fareth it by a ryotous seruaunt
It is muche lesse harme to let him passe
Than he shende al the seruauntes in the place
Therfore his maister gaue him acquytaunce
And bade him go, ih sorow and mischaunce
And thus this ioly prentise had his leue

Nowe let him ryot al the nyght or leue
And for ther is no theefe without a loube
That helpeth him to waste or to seuke
Of that he bribe can, or borowe may.
Anon he sent his bedde and his aray
Unto a compere of his owne sorte
That loued dyse, reuell and disporte
And had a wyfe, that held for countenaunce
A shoppe, and swyued for her sustenaunce.

¶ Here endeth the Cokes tale, and here followeth the man of lawes prologue.

Our hoste sawe well, that the bright sonne
The arke of his artyficiall day hath ronne
The fourth parte, and halfe an houre more
And though he were not depe ypeyrt in loue
He wyste it was the eyghtene day
Of Aprill, that is the messanger to May
And sawe wel, that the shadowe of euery tree
Was in lengthe, the same quantite
As was the body erect, that caused it
And therfore by the shadowe he tooke his mesure
That Phebus, which ꝑ shone clere and bright
Degrees was fourty clomben on hight
And for that day, as in latitude
It was ten of the clocke, he gan conclude
And sodenly he pleyde his horse aboure.
¶ Lordinges (quod I) I warne you al ꝑ route
The fourth part of this day is gon
Now for the loue of god and of seint Iohn
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may
Lordynges ꝑ time wasteth both nyght and day
And steleth from vs, what pryuely slepyng
And what through negligence in our waking
As doth the streme, that turneth neuer agayn
Discending fro ꝑ mountayne into the playn
Wel can Seneke, and many a philosophre
Bywayten tyme, more than golde in coffre
For loste of catell may recouered be
But loste of tyme shendeth vs (quod he)
It wol not come ayen without leue
No more than wol Assyuers mayden bede
When she hath lost it in her wanhope
Let vs not mo wolen thus in ydelnesse.
Sir man of lawe (quod he) so haue I blis
Tell vs a tale anon, as forwarde is
Ye ben submitted, through your fre assent
To stonden in this case at my iudgment
Acquiteth

Aquyteth you nowe of your beheste
Than haue you don your deuer at the leste.
¶ Beste (quod he) de pardeux ieo assent
To breke forwarde is not myn entent
Myn heste is dette, and I woll holde fayne
Al my beheste, I can no better sayne
For such law as a mã yeueth an other wight
He shulde himselfe vsen it by right
Thus wol our text: but natheless certayne
I can right nowe no thrifty tale sayne
That Chaucer (though he can but leudly
On metres and in rymyng craftely)
Hath sayd hem, in such englyshe as he can
Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man
And if he haue not sayd hem leue brother
In one boke, he hath sayd hem in a nother
For he hath told of louers vp and doun
Mo than Ouide made of mencion
In his epistels, that ben full olde
What shuld I tellen hem, sithẽ they bẽ tolde
In youthe he made of ire al alone
And sithen he hath spoken of euerychone
These noble wyues, and these louers eke
Who so that wol his large volume seke
Cleped the sayntes lyues of Cupide
There may he se the large woundes wide
Of Lucresse, and of Babylon Thisbe
The swerde of Dido for the false Enee
The fire of Phillis for her Demophoon
The playnt of Dianire, and of Hermion
Of Ariadna, and of Hipsiphile
The barayne yle stonding in the see
That bryngt Lyandre for Hero
The teares of Heleyn, and eke the wo
Of Brixeis, and of Laodomia
The cruelty of quene Medea
The lytel children hongyng by the hals
For the Jason, that was of loue so fals
Of Hipermistra, Penelope, and Alceste
Your wyfehod he cõmendeth with the beste
But certeynly no worde ne writeth he
Of thylke wicked ensample of Canace
That loued her owne brother synfully
Of such cursed stories I say fy
Out vpon Tyro Appolonius
How that cursed kynge Antyochus
Bytaft his doughter of her maydenhede
That is so horrible a tale for to rede
Whan he her threwe vpon the pament
And therfore he of full auisement
Nolde neuer write in non of his sermons
Of such vnkynde abhominations
Ne I ne wol non reherce, yet that I may
But of my tale how shall I don this day
Me were lothe be lykened douteles
To Muses, that men clepeth Pyrides
Methamorphoseos wotte what I mene
But natheles I recche not a bene
Though I come after him with hawbake
I speke in prose, and let him rymes make
And with that worde, he with a sobre chere
Began his tale, as ye shullen after here.

¶ Here endeth the man of lawes prologue, & here foloweth his tale.

Hateful harme, condycion of pouert
With thirst, with colde, with hunger so confoũded
To asken helpe, the shameth in thyn hert
If thou non aske, with nede ỹ art so woũded
That very nede vnwrappeth all thy woũde
Maugry thyn heed, ỹ must for indygẽce
Or stele, or begge, or borowe thy dispence

¶ Thou blamest Crist, & saiest ful bytterly
He misdepartith richesse temporall
Thy neyghbour thou wytest synfully
And sayest, thou hast to lytel, & he hath all
Parfay (saist thou) sometyme he reken shall
Whan that his tayle shall brenne in glede
For he nought helpeth nedeful in her nede.

¶ Herken what is the sentence of the wise
Better is to dyen, than to haue indygence
Thyn selfe neyghbour wol the dispyse
If thou be poore, farwel thy reuerence
Yet of the wyse man take this sentence
Al the dayes, poore men ben wicke
Beware therfore or ỹ come to the pricke

¶ If thou be poore, thy brother hateth the
And al thy frendes fleeth fro the, alas
O ryche marchauntes full of wele be ye
O noble prudent folke, as in this caas
Your bagges ben not fylde with ambes as
But with sys synke, ỹ renneth for your chaunce
At Christenmasse, mery may ye daunce.

¶ Ye seken lond & see for your wynnynges
As wise folke ye knowen al the state
Of reignes, ye ben fathers of tydynges
And tales, bothe of peace and debate

I was right nowe of tales desolate
Here that a marchant, gone is many a yere
Ye taught a tale, which ye shullen here.

IN Surrey whilom dwelte a company
Of chapmen riche, and there to sad and trewe
That wide where senten her spicery
Clothes of golde, and satten ryche of hewe
Her chafare was so thrifty and so newe
That euery wight hath deyntie to chafare
With hem, and eke to sellen hem her ware.

Now fel it, that the maisters of that sorte
Han shapen hem, to Rome for to wende
Were it for chapmanhode, or for disporte
Non other messegere wolde they thyder sende
But comē hem selfe to Rome, this is the ende
And in suche place as thought hem auaūtage
For her entent, they taken her herbygage.

Soiourned han these marchaūtes in ỹ town
Certayne tyme, as fel to her plesaunce
But so byfel, that the excellent renowne
Of ỹ emperours doughter dame Custaūce
Reported was, with euery circumstaunce
Unto these surreyn marchaūtes, in such wise
Fro day to day, as I shal you deuyse.

This was the comen voyce of euery man
Our emperour of Rome, god him se
A doughter hath, that sithen ỹ worlde began
To reken as wel her goodnes as her beaute
Was neuer suche a nother as is she
I pray to god in honour her sustene
And wolde she were of all Europe the quene

In her is hie beautie, without pryde
Youth, without greenhed or folye
To al her werkes vertue is her guyde
Humbles hath slayne in her al tyrannye
She is a myrrour of all curtesye
Her herte is very chambre of holynes
An honde ministre of fredom & almes.

And all this voice was sothe, as god is trewe
But nowe to oure purpose let vs turne ayen
These marchātes han don fret her shippes newe
And whā they han this blisfull mayden seyn
Come to Surrey ben they went ageyn
And don her nedes, as they han don yore
Ywriten in writh, I can say no more.

Now fel it, ỹ these marchātes stode in grace
Of him that was the Soudon of Surrye
For whā ỹ they came frō any straūge place
He wold of his benygne curtesye
Haken hem good chere, & besyly aspye
Tydinges of sondry realmes for to lere
The wonders ỹ they myght seen or here

Amonge other thinges specially (taūce
These marchātes haue him told of dame Cus-
So great nobiesse, in ernest serrously
That this Soudō hath cauzt so gret plesāce
To han her fygure in his remembraunce
And al his luste, and al his besy cure
Was for to loue her, while his lyfe may dure

Paraventure in that yike large boke
Which ỹ cleped is the heuen, ywryten was
With sterres, whan that he his byrth toke
That he for loue shuld han his death, alas
For in the sterres, clerer than is the glas
Is writen god wot, who so could it rede
The deth of euery man withouten drede

In sterres many a wynter there byfore
Was writtē the deth of Hector & of Achilles
Of Pompey & Julyus, or they were bore
The stryfe of Thebes, and of Hercules
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deth: but that mens wittes ben so dull
That no wyght can wel rede it at the full

This Souden for his prine cōsayle sent
And shortly of this mater for to pace
He hath to hem declared al his entent
And said hem certain, but if he mizt have gra (ce
To haue Custāce, within a lytel space
He nas but deed, & charged hem to hie
To shapen for his lyfe some remedye.

Diuers men, diuersly they sayden
The argument they casten vp and down
Many a subtel reason forthe they layden
They spoken of Magike, and abusioun
But finally, as in conclusioun
They can not sene in ỹ non auaunt age
Ne in non other way, saue in marriage.

Then saw they therin suche difficulte
By way of reason, to speke al playne
Bycause that there was suche diuersite
Bitwene her both lawes, ỹ they sayne
They trowe ỹ no christen prince wold fayne

Wredden his childe vnder our lawes swete
That vs was taught, by mahoūd our prophet

¶ And he answerd: rather than I lese
Custaunce, I wol be christen doubles
I more ben hers, I may nen other chese
I pray you holde your argumentes in pees
Sauerth my lyfe, and be not recheles
To geuen her, that hath my lyfe in cure
For in this wo, I may not long endure

¶ What nedeth greater declaracion
I say, by treatie and ambassadrye
And by the popes mediacion
And all the churche, and all the chevalry
That in destruccion of Paynimrye
And in encrease of Christes lawe dere
They ben accorded, as ye shall here.

¶ How that the Soudon and his baronage
And al his leges, shuld ycristened be
And he shall han Custaunce in marriage
And certayne golde, I not what quantite
And her to fynde sufficient furrie
The same accorde was sworne on either side
Now faire Custaunce, almyghty god the gyde.

¶ Now wolden some men waiten, as I gesse
That I shulde rehers all the purveyaunce
That the Emperour of his noblesse
Hath shapen for his doughter dame Custaunce
And eek what men knowen, that so grete a traine
May no manere han in a litell clause
As was araye for so highe a cause.

¶ Bishoppes ben shapen with her for to wende
Lordes and ladies, & knightes of renowne
And other folke ynowe this is the ende
And notified is throughout the towne
That every wight, with gret devocioun
Shulde pray Christ, that he this marriage
Receyue in grey, and spede this viage.

¶ The day is come of her departyng
I say the wofull day natural is come
That there maye be no lenger tarying
But forwarde they hem dresse al and some
Custance, that wyth sorowe is all ouercome
Full pale arist, and dressith her to wende
For well she sey, there is none other ende.

¶ Alas, what wondre is it though she wepte
That shal be sent to a straunge nation
Fro frendes, that so tenderly her kepte
And to be bounden vnder subiection
Of one, she knoweth not his condicion
Husbondes ben all good and han ben yore
That knowen wyues, I dare say no more

Father she said thy wretched childe Custaunce
Thy yonge daughter, fostred vp so softe
And ye my mother, my soueraigne plesaunce
Ouer al thing out take Christ on lofte
Custaunce your childe her comaundeth ofte
Vnto your grace: for I shal to purveye
Me shal I neuer more se you with eye.

¶ Alas, into the barbary nation
I must anon, fulwel it is your wyl
But Christ that starfe for our redempcion
So yeue me grace, his heestes to fulfyll
I wretched woman no force though I spyll
All time am borne to thraldom and penaunce
And to ben bonder maners gouernaunce.

I rede at Troy, whil Troyus bisieged was
Of Troye, ne whan Thebes cyte
Of Rome for the harme of Hanibal
That Romaines hath moe than ynowe
Was herd, such lamentacion weping for pyte
As was in the chambre for her departing
But forth she moste, whether she wepe or sing

¶ O first moving cruel firmament
With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay
And hurlest al fro est to occident
That naturally wolde holde another way
Thy crowding for the brunt is such assay
At the beginning of this feers viage
That cruel Mars hath slayn this marriage.

¶ Infortunate ascendent tortuous
Of which the lorde is helpeles falle, alas
Out of his angle into his derkest house
O Mars, O wrathe, as in this cas
O feble Venus, vnhappy ben thy pas
Thou knittest there as nought ne recheth
Ther thou were wel, fro thine art is wayued

¶ Imprudent Emperour of Rome, alas
Was there no philosofre in thy toune
Is no tyme bette than other in such cas
Of viage is there non electioune
Namely to folke of hye condicioun
Not whan a rote is of a byrthe vnto
Alas we ben to lewde, to late to knowe

¶ To

Cosip is brought this woful faire mayd
Solempnely, with euery circumstaunce
Now Jesu Christ be with you all (she sayd)
Ther nys no more, but farewel faire Custaice
She payneth her to make good countenance
And forthe I let her sayle in this manere
And tourne I woll agayne to my matere.

Explicit prima pars: et sequitur pars secunda.

The mother of the Soudan, wel of vices
Whyrd hath her formes playn entent
Howe he wol lette his olde sacrifices
And right anon, ther for her counsaile sent
And they ben comen, to know what she ment
And whan assembled was this folke in fere
She set her down, and said as ye shall here.

Lordes quod she ye knowen euerychone
How that my sonne is in power to lete
The holy lawes of our Alkaron
Yeuen by gabbes messenger Machomete
But ere ande we to gerre god I bete
Be lefe that rather out of my body flete
And Machometes lawe go out of my hert

But ye shulde be rydden of this newe lawe
Or thalbeene to our bodyes and penaunce
And afterwarde in hell to ben dawne
For he renayed Mahoundes ordenaunce
Wherfore good lordes, wol ye make assurance
As I shall lay, assenting to my lore
And I shal make his folk for euermore.

They Soudon, and assenten euery man
To lyue with her and dye and by her Soude
And euery he in the best wise that he can
To strengthen her, shall his frendes fonde
And the barb this empresse take in honde
And how ye shall here, that I shal deuise
And to hem al she spake in this wise.

Ye shul be fyrst faine, christendom to take
Clene water shal nat greue you but a lyte
And I shall such a reuel and a feest make
That as I trowe, I shall the Soudon quite
Or tho his wife be christened neuer to white
He shall yeue me leue to wasshe away the rede
Though I a tonne full of water ther lede

O Soudonesse, rote of iniquite
Virago, thou Semyram the secounde
O serpent vnder femenynete
Lyke to the serpent depe in hell ybounde
O fayned woman, al that may confounde
Vertue & innocence, through thy malyce
Is bredde in the, a nest of euery vyce

O Sathan envyous, sin thylke day
That thou were chaced from our heryetage
Wel knewest thou to women the olde way
Thou madest Eue to bringe vs in seruage
Thou wolt forbone this christen marryage
Thurs instrument, so wela way the whyle
Hast thou of wom̄e, whan ȝ wolt begyle.

This Soudonesse, whom I blame & wery
Let privily her counsayle gon her way
What shulde I in this tale lenger tarrye
She tydeth to the Soudon on a day
And sayd him, that she wolde reuve her lay
And christendom of prestes handes fonge
Repenting her, she longe was so longe

Besechyng him, to done her that honour
That she might have the christ folke to fede
To pleasen hem, I wol done my labour
The Soudon sayth, I wol don at your bede
And morwyng, whan meth her of that requede
So glad he was, he nyst not what to say
But hath her leue, & home she goth her way.

Vp rysen thes christen folke to londe
In sweme, such a great solempne toure
And bellefy thus Soudenesse hom̄e fonde
Fulle to his mother, & all the reygne aboute
And sayd his wife was comen out of doute
And prayden hem for to ryden ayenst ȝ queene
The honoure of his reigne for to sustene.

Great was the preste, & riche was the rate
Of Surreyens and Romayns vnethe yere
The mother of the Soudon, ryche and gat
Receyueth her with all glad chere
As any mother myght her doughter dere
And to the nexte cite there besyde
Vnto paas solempnely they ryde.

Thought trowe I the triumphe of Julius
Of which ȝ Lucan maketh such a boste
Was royaller, and more curious
Than was thassemblyng of this blyssful hoste
But this Scorpion, this wicked goste

The lodsnesse, for al her flatterynge
Cast vnder al this, ful mortally to stynge

¶ The Soudon cometh hiself sone after this
So ryally, that wonder is to tell
He welcometh her with muche ioye & blys
And thus in myrthe & ioy I let him dwell
The fruite of euery tale is for to tell
Whan time come, men thought it for the best
That reuell stynte, and men gon to rest

¶ The tyme come, this olde Soudomesse
Ordayned hath the feest, of which I tolde
And to the feest, christen folke hem dresse
In gentral, both yong and olde
There may men feest and ryalte beholde
And deyntes mo than I can deuyse
But all to dere they boughten it or they ryse

¶ O Soudon, wo þ euer thou art successour
To worldly blysse, springed with bytternesse
The ende of ioye, of our worldly labour
Wo occupieth the ende of our gladnes
Herken this counsaile, for thy sykernes
Vpon thy glad day have thou in mynde
The vnware wo or harm, þ cometh behynde

¶ For shortly to tellen at a worde
The Soudon, and the cristen euerychone
Ben al to hewe, & stycked at the borde
But it were only dame Custaunce alone
This olde Soudonesse, curled crone
Hath with her frendes don thys cursed dede
For she her selfe wolde all the counsel rede

Ne there was surreien none þ was cõuerted
That of the counsaile of the Soudon wot
That he nas al to hewe, er he asserted
And Custaunce han they taken anon forthot
And in a shyppe all stereles (god wot)
They han her set, & bydden her lerne to saile
Out of Surrey ayenwarde to Itayle.

¶ A certayne tresour, that she thyder ladde
And soth to sayne, vitayle great plente
They han her yeuen, & clothes eke she had
And forth she sayleth in the salte se
O my Custaunce, ful of benygnite
O Emperours yong doughter dere
He that is lorde of fortune, be thy stere.

¶ She blesseth her, & with full pytous voice
Vnto the crosse of Christ, tho said she.
O clere, o welful auter, holy croice
Reed of the lambes blode, ful of pyte
That wesshe þ worlde fro the olde iniquite
Me fro the fende, and fro his clawe kepe
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe

¶ Victorious tree, protection of trewe
That onely worthy were for to bere
The kyng of heuen, with his woundes newe
The whit lambe, that hurt was with a spere
Flemere of feendes, out of him and here
On whiche thy lymmes, faithfully extended
Me kepe, & yeue me mighe my life to amende

¶ Yeres & dayes sayleth this creature
Throughout þ see of Grece, vnto þ straite
Of Marocke, as it was her auenture
O, many a sory mele may she bayte
After her deth ful oft may she wayte
Or that the wylde wawes wold her dryue
Vnto the place there she shulde aryue.

¶ Men might̃ asken, why she was not slayn
Eke at the feest, who myghte her body saue
I answere to that demaunde agayn
Who saued Daniel in that horrible caue
Ther euery wight, wer he maister or knaue
Was with the lyon frette or he asserte
No wight but God, that he bare in hys herte.

¶ God lyst to shewe his wonderful miracle
In her, for she shuld serue his myghty werkes
Crist that is to euery harme tryacle
By certain meanes often, as knowen clerkes
Doth thing for certayn ende, þ full derke is
To mans wytte, that for our ygnoraunce
Ne can nat know his prudent purueyaunce

¶ Now sith þ she was not at þ feest yslawe
Who kepeth her fro the drenching in the see
Who kept Jonas in the fysshes mawe
Tyl he was spouted out at Ninyue
Wel mai men knowe, it was no wight but he
That kept the people Ebrak from drenching
With drie fete, through the see passyng

Who hath the four spirites of the tempeste
That power had, bothe to anoye londe & see
Bothe northe and southe, and also west & este
Anoyeth neyther see, ne londe, ne tree
Soothly the cõmaunder therof was he
That fro the tempest aye this woman kept
As wel whan she woke as whan she slept

Wher

Where might this womā mete a drinke haue
Thre yere & more, howe lasteth her vitayle
Who fed the Egypcyan Mary in the caue
Or in desert (none but Christ sans fayle)
Fiue thousād falke it was as great marualle
With loues fyue and fysshes two to fede
God sent his foyson at her great nede.

¶ She driueth forth in to our Occian
Throughout the wilde see, tyl at the laste
Under han holde, that nempne Ine can
Fer in Northumberlond, the wawe her caste
And in the sande her shyppe stycked so faste
That thence nolde it not of all a tyde
The wil of Christ was ꝑ she shuld ther abide

¶ The constable of the castel downe is fare
To serue this wrecke, & al ꝑ shyp he sought
And founde this wery woman full of care
He fonde also the treasoure that she brought
In her langage, mercy she besought
The lyfe out of her body for to twyn
Fer to deliuer of wo that she was in.

¶ I maner latyn corrupte was her speche
But algates therby was she vnderstonde
The constable, whan him lyst no lenger seche
This wofull woman brought he to londe
She knoleth downe, & thanketh gods sonde
But what she was, she wolde no man sey
For foule ne fayre, though she shuld dey

¶ She said she was so mased in the see
That she forgate her mynde, by her trouth
The constable of her hath so great pyte
And eke his wife, that they wepen for routhe
She was so dylygent withouten slouthe
To serue & plese euerych in that place
That al her louen, ꝑ loken in her face

¶ The cōstable, & dame Hermegilde his wyfe
Were paynems, & that contre euery where
But Hermegylde loued her right as her lyfe
And Custaūce hath so long soiourned there
In orisons, with many a bytter tere
Fyl Jesu hath conuerted through his grace
Dame Hermegylde, cōstablesse of that place.

In al that londe durst no christen route
Al christen folke ben fled from ꝑ countre
Through paynems, that cōquered all about
The plages of the North, by londe & see
To wales fledde the christianyte
Of olde Bretons, dwellyng in that Ile
There was her refute, for the meane whyle

But yet nas ther neuer christē bretō so exiled
That there nas some in her priuete
Honoured Christe, & heathen folke begyled
And nye the castel suche there dwellen thre
That one of hem was blynd, & might not se
But it were with thyrke eyen of his mynde
With whiche men seen, after they ben blynde

¶ Bright was the sunne, as in somers day
For whiche the constable, and his wife also
And Custaunce, han taken the right way
Towarde the see, a furlong way or two
To playen, and to romen to and fro
And in her walke, thre blynde men they met
Croked and olde, with eyen faste yshet

In ꝑ name of Christ, cryed this blynd breton
Dame Hermegylde, geue me syght againe
This lady ware a frayde of the soun
Lest that her husbonde, shortly for to sayne
Wold her for Jesus Christes lore haue slaine
Til Custāce made her bold, & bad her werch
The wyl of Christ, as doughter of his cherch

¶ The constable wore abashed of that syght
And sayd: what amounteth al this fare
Custaunce answerd: sir it is Christes myght
That helpeth folke out of the fendes snare
And so forforth she gan our lawe declare
That she the constable, er that it was eue
Cōuerted hath, & on Christ made him beleue

This cōstable was nothing lord of this place
Of which I spekē, there he Custaunce fonde
But kept it strongly, many a wynter space
Under Alla, kyng of Northumberlonde
That was ful wise, & worthy of his honde
Agayne the Scottes, as men may wel here
But turne I wol agayne to my matere.

¶ Sathan, ꝑ euer vs wayteth to begyle
Sawe of Custaunce all her perfectioun
And caste anon how he myght quite her wyle
And made a yonge knyght, ꝑ dweit in ꝑ toun
Loue her so hotte, of foule affectioun
That verily, him thought ꝑ he shulde spyll
But he of her ones myght haue his wyll.

¶ He woeth her, but it auayled nought
She wold do no synne by no wey

And for dispyte, he compassed in his thought
To maken her on shamful dethe to dey
He wayteth whan the constable is awey
And priuely on a nyght he crepte
In to Hermegyldes chambre while she slepte

Wery forwaked in her orisons
Slepeth Custaunce and Hermegylde also
This knyght, through Sathans temptacios
Il softly is to the bedde ygo
And cut the throte of Hermegylde a two
And laid the blody knyfe by dame Custance
And wet his way, ther god yeue hi mischãce

Sone after cometh the cõstable home againe
And eke Alla, that kyng was of that londe
And fawe his wyfe dispytously islayne
For whiche he wepe and wronge his honde
And in the bedde the blody knyfe he fonde
By dame Custãce, alas what might she saye
For very wo, her wyte was all away

To kyng Alla was tolde al this mischaunce
And eke the tyme, & where, and in what wyse
That in a shyppe was founde this Custaũce
As ye han herde me deuise
The kynges herte, for pyte gan agrise
Whan he sawe so beautyful a creature
Fal in disease and so miserable aventure

For as ye lambe toward his dethe is brought
So stant this innocent before the kyng
This false knyght, ye hath this treso wrought
Deceyth her ofte, ye she hath don this thyng
But nathelesse there was great mourning
Among the people, & sayd they can not gesse
That she had don so great a wyckednesse

For they han seme her euer so vertuous
And louyng Hermegyle, right as hir lyfe
Of this bare witnesse euerych in ye house
Saue he that Hermegyle slow with his knyfe
This gentil kyng hath caught a grete mouse
Of this wimes, & thought he wold enquere
Deper in this case, the trouth to lere

Alas Custaũce, thou hast no champyon
Ne fyght canste thou not, so wela way
But he that starfe for our redemption
And bonde Sathan, & yet lyth there he lay
So be thy stronge champyon this day
For but if Crist on the myracle kythe
Without gylt ye shalte ben slayne as swythe

She set her down on knees, & thus she
Immortall god, that saued Susanne
Fro false blame, & thou mercyful mayde
Marye I mene, doughter to seynt Anne
Before whose childe angels syng Osanne
If I be gyltelesse of this felonye
My socoure be, or els shall I dye

Haue ye not sene somtyme a pale face
(Among a prees) of him that hath ben lad
Toward his deth, wher as hym get no gra
And suche a colour in his face hath had
That me might know his face ye was by
Amonges al the faces in that route
So standeth Custaũce, & loketh her about

O quenes, lyuyng in prosperite
Duchesses, and ye ladyes euerychon
Haue some routhe on her aduersite
An emperours doughter stante alone
She hath no wyte, so wo to make her mo
O bloode royal, that stondeth in this dis
Ferre ben thy frendes at thy grete nede.

This Alla kyng, hath suche compassyon
As gentil herte is ful of pyte
That from his eyen ran the water doun
Alone hastely do ferre a bote quod he
And if this knight wol swere, how that he
This woman slowe, yet wol we us auyse
Whom that we wol shall ben our iustyse

A barge was bote, auisen with al purueyed
Was ferre, & therin he swore anone
She gilty was, and in the mene while
An angel hem smote on the necke bone
That bidde he fyl a swowe, as a stone
And berth his eyen blaste out of his face
In sight of euery body in that place

A voice was herde in generall audience
That said: Thou hast defamed giltes
The doughter of holy chirche, in the pres
Thus hast thou don, and yet I bold me pe
Of this maruayle, agast was al the pres
As dismayed folke, they stonden euerichon
For drede of wreche, saue Custance alon

Ferre was ye bote, and eke the repentan
Of hem that hadden wrought suspecion
Upon this holy innocent Custaunce
And for this miracle, in conclusion
And by Custaunces mediacion

The kyng, and many an other in that place
Conuerted was, thanked be goddes grace

This falle knight was slain for his untroth
By iudgement of Alla hastely
And yet Custaunce had of his deth gret roth
And after this, Jesus of his mercy
Made Alla wedden full solempnely
This holy mayd, that is so bright & shene
And thus hath christ made Custaunce a quene

But who was wofull, if I shulde not ly
Of this wedding: but Donegilde & no mo
The kynges mother, full of tirranny
Her thought her cursed hert brast a two
She wouldnot her sonne had do so
Her thought a dispite, that he should take
So straunge a creature unto his make

We lyst not of the chaffe ne of the stree
Make so longe a tale, as of the corne
What shulde I tell of the royalte
Of þ mariage, or which course goth before
Who blowerth in a trompe or in an horne
The fruite of euery tale is for to say
They eten and drunken, daunce and play

They gon to bedde, as it was skil & right
For though that wiues be ful holy thinges
They must take in patience a nyght
Suche maner necessaryes, as ben plesinges
To folke that han wedded hem with ringes
And lay a lyth her holynesse aside
As for the tyme, it may none other betyde

On her he gatte a man childe anone
And to a bysshoppe, and to his constable che
He toke his wife to kepe, whan he is gon
To Scotland warde, his seemen for to se
Hem selfe Custaunce, þ is so humble & meke
So longe is gon with childe tyl that she
Her hath her chaber, abiding christes will

The tyme is come, a man childe she bare
Mauricius at fonstone they him calle
This constable doth forth come a messanger
And wrote to his king, that cleped was Alle
How that this blissful tydyng is befalle
And other tydynges nedefull for to say
He taketh the letter, & forth he goth his way

This messanger to done his auauntage
Unto the kynges mother rydeth swythe
And saluyeth her full fayre in his language
Madame (quod he) ye may be glad & blythe
And thanketh god an hundred thousand sithe
My lady quene hath childe, withouten doute
To ioye and blisse of al thys reygne about.

Lo here the letters seales of this thyng
That I mote beare, in all the haste I may
Yeue ye wol ought unto youre sone þ kyng
I am your seruaunt both nyght and day
Donegylde answerde, as at this tyme may
But here I wol al nyght thou take thy rest
To morowe wol I say the what my leste

This messager dróke sadly both & ale wine
And stollen were his letters priuely
Out of his bore, whyle he slept as a swine
And counterfeted was ful subtelly
Another letter, wrought ful synfully
Unto the kyng directe of this matere
Fro his constable, as ye shall after here

The letter spake, the quene delyuered was
Of so horrible a fendlisshe creature
That in the castell non so hardy was
That any whyle durst therin endure
The mother was an elfe by auenture
Icome, by charmes or by sorcerye
And euery wight hateth her compayne

Wo was this king, whe he þ letter had seen
But to no wight he tolde his sorowe sore
But with his owne hande he wrote ageyn
Welcome the sonde of christ for euermore
To me, that am newe lerned in his lore
Lord, welcome be thy will and thy pleasaunce
My will I put all in thyne ordinaunce

Keepeth this childe, al be it foule or fayre
And eke my wyfe, unto my home comming
Christe when hem lyst, may send me an heyre
More agreable than this, to my lykyng
This letter he sealed, priuely weeping
Whiche to the messanger was taken soone
And forth he goeth there is no more to done

O messanger fulfilled of dronkenesse
Strong is thy breth, thy lymmes faltren aye
And thou bewrayest al secretnesse
Thy mynde is lorne, thou langlist as a iaye
Thy face is turned in a newe araye
There dronkennesse reygneth in any route
There is no counsayle hid withouten doute

O Donegild, I ne haue non englisch digne
Unto thy malice, and thy tyrannye
And therfore to the fende I the resigne
Let him endite of thy traytrye
Fye mannisshe fye: O nay by god I lye
Fye fendisshe spirit, for I dare well tell
Though thou here walke, thy spirit is in hel

This messanger cometh fro ꝑ kyng agayne
And at the kynges mothers house he lyght
And she was of this messanger full fayne
And pleased hym in all that euer she myght
He dronke, and well his girdel vnder pight
He slepeth, and he snorteth in hys gyse
All nyght, tyll the sonne gan aryse

Eke were hys letters stollen euerychon
And counterfeted letters in thys wyse:
The kyng commaundeth his constable anon
Upon payne of hangyng on an hye iewyse
That he ne shulde suffren in no wyse
Custaunce, within hys realme for to abyde
Three dayes, and a quarter of a tyde

But in the same shyppe, as he her fonde
Her and her yonge sonne, and al her gere
He shulde croude, and put fro the londe
And charge her, that she neuer eft come there
O Custaunce, well may thy goste haue fere
And slepyng in thy dreame, ben in penaunce
When Donegilde, cast all thys ordinaunce

This messanger on ꝑ morow when he woke
Unto the castell halte the nerr way
And to the constable he the letter toke
And when that he thys pitous letter sey
Full ofte he sayd (alas) and welawey
Lorde Christ (qd he) howe may this worlde
So full of sinne is many a creature (endure

O mighty god, yf that it be thy wyll
Sin thou art ryghtful iuge, how may it be
That thou wolt suffer innocence to spylle
And wicked folke to reigne in prosperite
O, good Custaunce (alas) so wo is me
That I mote be thy turmentour, or els dey
On shames deth, there nys non other wey

Wepen both yonge and olde in that place
When that the kyng thys cursed letter sente
And Custaunce with a deedly pale face
The fourth day, forward her shyp she wente
But natheles, she taketh in good entente
The will of Christ, & kneleyng in that strond
She sayd lorde, aye welcome be thy sonde

Che that me kept fro that false blame
Whyles I was on the londe amonges you
He can me kepe fro harme, & eke fro shame
In the salt see, although I se not howe
As strong as euer he was, he is nowe
In hym trust I, and in hys mother dere
That is to me, my sayle and eke my stere

Her lytel childe lay weepyng in her arme
And kneleyng pitously, to hym she sayde
Peace litell sonne, I wol do the none harme
With that her kercher of her hed she brayde
And ouer his lytell eyen she it layde
And in her arme, she lulleth it full faste
And into heauen her eyen vp she caste.

Mother (quod she) & mayde bright Mary
Sothe is, that through womans eggement
Mankynde was lore, & dampned aye to dy
For whiche thy childe was on crosse rent
Thy blissfull eyen sawe all his turment
Than is there no comparison betwene
Thy wo, and any wo that man may sustene

Thou se thy child slaine before thyn eyen
And yet nowe lyueth my lytell childe parfay
Nowe lady bright, to whom al woful cryen
Thou glory of womanhood, thou fayre mayde
Thou hauen of refute, bright sterre of day
Rewe on my childe, of thy gentelnesse
That rewest on euery rufull in distresse

O litell childe (alas) what is thy gilte
That neuer wroughtest synne, as yet parde
Why wol thyn harde father haue the spilte
O mercy: dere constable (quod she)
As let my lytle childe dwell here with the
And yf thou darst not sauen hym fro blame
So kysse hym ones, in hys fathers name

Therwith she loketh backwarde to ꝑ londe
And sayd: farewell husbande routhelesse
And vp she rist, & walketh downe ꝑ stronde
Towarde the shippe her foloweth al ꝑ prees
& euer she praieth her child to holde his pes
And taketh her leue, and with an holy entente
She blesseth her, & into the shyppe she wente

Victayled was the shippe, it is no drede
Habundantly, for her a full longe space

nd other necessaries that shulde nede
he had inowe, hereid by goddes grace
or wind & wedder, almighty god purchace
nd bring her home, I can no better say
utt in the see, she driueth forth her way

Alla the king cometh home sone after this
into his castell, of whiche I tolde
nd asketh where his wife & his chylde is
The constable gan about his hert to colde
nd playnly al the maner hym tolde
as ye han herde, I can tell it no better
nd shewed the king his seale and his letter

And sayd: lorde as ye cõmaunded me
pon payne of deth, so haue I done certayn
thys messanger turmented was, tyll he
Past beknowen, and tell plat and playn
ro might to night, in what place he had layn
nd eh us by witte subtell enquiryng
magend was, by whome thys harme gan
(spryng

The hand was knowen, & the letter wrote
nd all the dewyn of thys cursed dede
ut in what wyse, certaynely I note
he effecte is this, that Alla out of drede
is mother slow, that may men plainly rede
or that the traytour was to her alegaunce
hus endeth olde Donegilde, w mischaũce

The sorow that this Alla night and day
Maketh for his childe, and for hys wife also
here is no tonge that it tel may
ut nowe woll I to Custaunce go
hat sitteth in the see, in payne and wo
yue yere and more, as liked Christes sonde
or that her shyppe aproched vnto londe

Under an hethen castell, at the laste
Of whiche the name in my text I not fynde
Custaunce and eke her childe the see vp caste
myghty god, that saueth al mankynde
aue on Custaũce, & on her child some mynde
hat fallen is in hethen hond efte sone
n poynt to spyll, as I shall tell you sone

own fro þ castel cometh ther many a wyze
o gauren on this shippe, & on Custaunce
ut shortly fro the castel on a nyght
he lordes stewarde god yeue hi mischaũce
thefe, that had renyed our creaunce
ame into the shippe alone, & sayd he shulde
er lemman be, whether she wolde or nolde

Wo was the wrtched woman tho bygon
Her child cried, & she cried pitously
But blyssful Mary halpe her anon
For with her strogyng, wel & mightyly
The theefe fel ouer the borde, all sodaynly
And in the see he drenched for vengeaunce
And thus hath Christ vnwemed kept custaunce

O foule lust of luxure, lo thyne ende
Nat onely that thou fayntest mans mynde
But verely, thou wolt his body shende
The ende of thy werke, or of thy lustes blynd
Is cõplaining: how many one may me fynd
That not for werke somtime, but for thẽent
To don this synne, hene eyther slayne or shent

How may this weke woman haue þ strẽgth
Her to defende agaynst this renegate
O Goliyas, vnmesurable of length
How might Dauid make the so mate
So yonge, & of armure so desolate
Howe durst he loke on thy dredfull face
Wel may men sene, it is but gods grace.

Who yaue Judith courage or hardynesse
To sleen him Holofernes in his tent
And to delyuer out of wretchydnesse
The people of god I say, for this entent
That right as god, spirite and vigore sente
To hem, and saued hem out of myschaunce
So sente he myght & vigore to Custaunce

Forth goth her ship thorow þ narow mouth
Of Subalter and septe, fletyng aye
Somtyme weste, & somtyme northe & south
And somtyme este, ful many a wery daye
Tyl Christes mother, yblessed be she aye
Hath shapen, through her endeles goodnesse
To make an ende of all her heuynesse.

Explicit secunda pars,
et sequitur pars
tertia.

NOwe lette vs stynte of Custaunce but a throw
And speake we of the Romayne Emperoure
That out of Surrey hath by letters knowe
The slaughter of christen folke, & dyshonour
Done to his doughter, by a false traytour
I meane the cursed wicked Soudonnesse
That at the feest, let sleen both more & lesse

For

¶ For which this Emperour hath sent anon
His senatour, with royall ordinaunce
And other lordes, god wote many one
On Surreyns to done hye vengeaunce
They brenen, sleen, & brigen hē to mischaūce
Ful many a day: but shortly this is the ende
Homward to Rome, they shapē hem to wēde

¶ This senatour repayreth with victorye
To Rome warde, sayling full royally
And met the ship driving, as sayeth the storye
In whiche Custaunce, sat full pensifly
Nothyng knewe he what she was, ne why
She was in suche aray, ne she nolde sey
Of her estate, though she shoulde dey

¶ He bringeth her to Rome, and to his wife
He yaue her, and her yonge sone also
And with the senatour she ladde her lyfe
Thus can our lady bring out of wo
Wofull Custaunce, and many an other mo
And longe tyme dwelled she in that place
In holy werkes euer, as was her grace.

¶ The senatours wyfe her aunte was
But for al that, she knewe her neuer ỳ more
I will no lenger tary in this caas
But to kyng Alla, the whiche I spake of yore
That for his wife wepeth, and syketh sore
I will retourne, and let I wyll Custaunce
Under the senatours gouernaunce.

¶ Kyng Alla, which ỳ had his mother slayn
Upon a day fell in suche repentaunce
That yf I shortly tellen al shal, a playn
To Rome he cometh, to receyue his penaūce
And putteth hym in the popes ordinaunce
In hye & in lowe, & Jesu Christ besought
Forgyue his wicked werkes, ỳ he wrought

The fame anon through Rome toun is born
Howe Alla kyng, shal come on pilgrimage
By herbegers that wenten hym beforn
For whiche the senatour, as was vsage
Rode hym agayne, and many of hys linage
As well to shewen his hye magnificence
As to done any kynge reuerence

¶ Great chere doth this noble senatour
To kyng Alla, and he to hym also
Euerych of hem doth other great honour
And so befell, that on a day or two
This senatour is to kyng Alla go
To feste, and shortly yf I shall not lye
Custaunces sonne went in hys companye

Som mē wold sayn, at ỳ request of custaūce
This senatour had ladde this childe to fest
I may not tellen euery circumstaunce
Be as be may, there was he at lest
But soth it is, right at his mothers hest
Byforn Alla, durying the meate space
The childe stode, loking in the kinges face

This Alla kig, hath of this child gret wōder
And to the senatour he sayd anon
Whose is ỳ fayre child, that stōdeth yonder
I not (quod he) by god and by sayntē Johan
A mother he hath, but father hath he non
That I of wote, but shortly in a stounde
He tolde Alla, howe the chylde was founde

¶ But god wote (quod the senatour also)
So vertuous a lyuer in my lyfe
Ne sawe I neuer, as she, ne herde of mo
Of worldly woman, mayden, ne of wyfe
I dare wel say, she had leuer a knyfe
Through her brest, than ben a woma wicke
There is no mā couth bring her to ỳ pricke

¶ Howe was the childe as lyke Custaunce
As possible is, a creature for to be
Thys Alla hath the face in remembraunce
Of Dame Custaunce, and theron mused he
Yeue that ỳ childes mother were aught she
That is hys wyfe, and priuely he sight
And spedde hym fro the table, that he might

Parfay he thought, ỳ fatome is in min herd
I ought deme of skylfull iudgement
That in the salte see my wyfe is dēd
And afterwarde he made his argument
What wote I, yf Christ hath hyther sent
My wyfe by see, as well as he her sent
To my contry, fro thens ỳ she was went

¶ And after anon, hom with the senatour
Goth Alla, for to se this wonder chaunce
This senatour doth Alla great honour
And hastely he sent after Custaunce
But trusteth wel, her luste not to daunce
When she wiste wherfore was that sonde
Twiseth vpon her fete myght she stonde

When Alla sawe hys wyfe fayre he her gret
And wept, that it was routh to forsee

For at the first loke he on her set
He knewe well verely, that it was she
And for sorowe, as dombe stant as a tre
So was her hert shet in distresse
Whan she remembred hys vnkyndnesse

Twyse she swouned in hys owne syght
He wepeth and hym excuseth pitously
Nowe god (qd he) and hys hallowes bright
So wysly on my soule haue mercy
That of your harme, as gyltelesse am I
As is Mauris my sonne, so lyke your face
Bis the fende me fetche out of thys place.

Long was the sobbyng, & the bitter payne
Or that her wofull hert myght rese
Great was the pyte to here hem complayne
Though which playntes gā her wo encrese
I praye you all my labour to release
I may not tell her wo, tyll to morowe
I am so wery to speake of her sorowe

But finally, whan the sothe is wyste
That Alla gyltelesse was of her wo
I trowe an hundred tymes ben they kyste
And suche a blesse is there betwixt hem two
That saue the loye, that lasteth euermo
There is no lyke, that any creature
Hath seyn or shal, while the world may dure

Tho prayed she her husbonde meekely
In releasyng of her pitous payne
That he wolde pray her father specially
That of his maiestie he wolde enclyne
To vouchesafe some day with hym to dyne
She prayed hym eke, he shulde by no way
Vnto her father no worde of her to say

Some mē wold say, þ the child Maurice
Both this message vntyll thys Emperour
But as I gesse, Alla was not so nyce
To hym that was of so soueraygne honour
As he that is of christen folke the flour
Sent any childe, but it is bette to deme
He went hym selfe, and so it maye wel seme

Thys Emperour graunted gentelly
To come to dyner, as he him besought
And all was redy he loked besyly
Þō this childe, & on his doughter thought
Alla goeth to hys ynne, and as he him ought
Arayed for this feest in euery wyse
As ferforth as hys conyng may suffice

The morowe came, & Alla gan him dresse
And eke his wife, the Emperour for tomete
And forth they ryde in loye and in gladnesse
And whan she sawe her father in the strete
She light downe and falleth hym to fete
Father (qd she) your yonge childe Custaunce
Is nowe ful clene out of your remēbraunce

I am your doughter Custaunce (quod she)
That whylom ye han sent into Surrye
It am I father, that vnto falce fe
Was put alone, and dampned for to dye
Nowe good father I you mercy crye
Sende me no more in to hethennesse
But thanken my lorde here of hys kyndnesse

Who can the pitous sorte tellen all
Betwixt hem that (in they ben thus ymette
But of my tale make an ende I shall
The day goeth faste, I wol no longer lette
Thys glad folke to dyner ben sette
In loye and blisse, at meate I let hem dwell
A thousande folde well more than I can tell

Thys childe Mauris was sithen emperour
Made by the Pope, and lyued christenly
To Christes churche he did great honour
But I lette all thys storye passen by
Of Custaunce is my tale specially
In olde Romayn gestes men may fynde
Maurys lyfe, I beare it not in mynde

This kyng Alla, when hys time was
With this Custaūce, his holy wyfe so swete
To Englonde ben they come the right way
Where as they lyue in loye and in quyete
But lytel whyle it lasteth I you hete
Joy of this worlde, for tyme wol not abyde
Fro day to myght, it chaungeth as the tyde

Who lyued euer in suche delyte a day
That he ne meued outher in conscience
Or ire, or talent of some kyn affray
Enuye or pryde, or passion, or offence
I ne say, but for this ende, and this sentence
That lytell whyle in loye or in plesaunce
Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custaunce

For deth, þ taketh of hye & lowe his rente
When passed was a yere, euen as I gesse
Out of thys worlde kyng Alla heente
For whom Custaūce hath full gret heuinesse
Nowe let vs prayen god his soule blesse

And

And home Custaunce, finally to say
Towarde the towne of Rome goth her way

¶ To Rome is come this holy creature
And fynderth her father hole and sounde
Nowe is she skaped all her auenture
And when that she her father hath yfounde
Downe on her knees she goeth to grounde
Weping for tenderneſſe in hert blythe
She herieth god, an hundred thousand sythe

¶ In vertue and holy almesedede
They liuen all, and neuer a sonder wende
Tyll deth departen hem, this life they lede
And fareth nowe well, my tale is at an ende
Now Jesu Christ, ꝑ of his might may sende
Joy after wo, gouerne vs in hys grace
And kepe vs all, that ben in thys place.

¶ Thus endeth the man of lawes tale, and here foloweth the Squiers prologue.

OUr hoſte on his stirops stode anon
And said: good mē herkeneth euerichon
Thys was a thrifty tale for the nones
Sir parisshe preest, qd he, for goddes bones
Tell vs a tale, as was thy forwarde yore
I see well that ye lerned men in lore
Can muche good, by goddes dignite
The parson him answerde, benedicite
What eyleth the man, so synfully to swere
¶ Our hoste answerd, O Jenkin, be ye there
Now good mē, qd our hoste herkeneth to me
I smell a loller in the wynde (quod he)
Abideth for goddes digne passion
For we shall haue a predication.
This loller here, wol prechen vs somwhat.
¶ Nay by my fathers soule, that shal he nat
Sayd the Squier, here shall he nat preche
Here shal he no gospel glose ne teche
We leueth al in the great god (quod he)
He wolde sowen some difficulte
Or springe cockell in our clene corne
And therfore hoste, I warne the beforne
My ioly body, shall a tale tell
And I shal kyngen you so mery a bell
That I shall waken all thys companye
But it shall not ben of philosophye
Ne phislike, ne termes queynte of lawe
There is but lytell latten in my mawe.

¶ Here endeth the Squiers prologe, and herafter foloweth his tale.

AT Sarra, in the lond of Tartary
There dwelte a kyng that warred Surry
Through whiche there died many a douzty man
This noble kynge was called Cambuscan
Whiche in his tyme was of so great renoun
That there nas no where, in no regyon
So excellent a lorde in all thyng
Him lacked nought, that longed to a kyng
As of the secte of whiche he was borne
He kept his lay to whiche he was sworne
And therto he was hardy, wyse, and ryche
And pytous and iuste alway yliche
Trewe of his word, benigne and honorable
Of his corage, as any centre stable
Yonge, fresshe, & stronge, in armes desyrous
As any bacheler of al his hous
A fayre person he was, and fortunate
And kept alwaye so royall astate
That there nas no where such another man.
This noble kyng, this tartre, this Cābuscan
Had two sonnes by Elfeta his wyfe
Of whiche the eldest hyght Algarsyfe
That other was cleped Camballo.
¶ A doughter had this worthy kyng also
That yongest was, and hight Canace
But for to tell you all her beaute

t lyche not in my tonge, ne in my conny ng
dare not vndertake so hie a thyng
yen Englyche eke is vnsufficient
t must ben a rethor excellent
that couth his colours, longing for the arte
f he shuld discrive here euery parte
am none suche, I mote speke as I can
And so byfel, that this Cambuscan
hath twenty wynter borne his drademe
s he was wont, fro yere to yere I deme
e let the feest of his natiuite
one crien, throughout Sarra his cyte
the last ydus of Marche, after the yere.
Phebus the sonne, ful ioly was and clere
for he was nye his exaltacion
in Marces face, and in his mancion
in Tryes, the colloryke, the hote sygne
ful iusly was the wether and benygne
for which the foules, ayenst the sunne shene
what for the season, and the yonge grene
ful londe songe her affeccions
hem semed han getten hem protections
yen the swerde of wynter kene and colde.
This Cãbuscan, of which I haue you told
in royall vestementes, syte on his deys
with drademe, ful hye in his paleys
and holde his feest so royal and so riche
that in this worlde nas there non it lyche
f which, if I shall tell of all the array
than wold it occupye a sõmers day
and eke it nedeth not to deuyse
at euery course, the ordre of her seruice
wol not tell of her straunge sewes
ne of her swannes, ne of her heronsewes
ke in that londe, as tellen knightes olde
ther is some meatr, that is ful daynty holde
that in this londe men fetche of it but small
ther is no man that may reporten all.
I wyl not tarye you, for it is prime
nd for it is no fruyte, but losse of tyme
nto my first purpose I will haue recourse.
And so byfel that after the thirde course
while that this king syte thus in his noblay
herkenyng his minstralles her thinges play
fore him at his borde delycously
n at the hale doze al sodaynly
there came a knyght on a stede of brasse
nd in his honde a brode myrrour of glasse
pon his thombe he had of golde a ryngе
nd by his syde a naked swerde hongyng
nd vp he rideth to the hie borde
n all the halle ne was there spoke a worde
for maruelle of the knight, him to beholde
ful besyly they wayten yonge and olde.
This straunge knight that come thus sodenly
Al armed saue his heed, ful royally
Salued kyng and quene, and lordes all
By ordre, as they syten in the hall
With so hie reuerence and obeysaunce
As wel in speche as in countenaunce
That Gawayne with his olde curtesye
Though he come ayen out of fayrye
Ne coude him not amende of no worde
And after this, before the hye borde
He with a manly voyce said his message
After the forme vsed in his langage
Without vice of syllable or of letter
And for his tale shulde seme the better
Accordant to his wordes was his chere
As teacheth arte of speche hem that it lere
Al be that I can not sowne his style
Ne I ne can not clymben so hye a style
Yet say I thus as to my conyen entent
Thus muche amõteth all that euer he ment
If it so be, that I haue it in my mynde.
He sayd: The kyng of Arabye and of Ynde
My liege lorde, on this solempne day
Saluteth you, as he best can and may
And sendeth you in honour of your feest
By me that am redy at your heest
This stede of brasse that easyly and wel
Can in the space of a day naturell
This is to say, in foure and twenty houres
Where so ye lyst, in drought or in shoures
Beren your body in to euery place
Into whiche your herte wilneth to pace
Without wem of you, through foul or faire
Or if ye lyst to flen in the eyre
As doth an Egle, whan him lyst to sore
This same stede shal bere you euermore
Without harme, tyl ye ben there you lest
Though that ye slepen on his backe and rest
And turne again with the writhyng of a pyn
He that it wrought coude ful many a gyn
He wayted ful many a constellation
Or he had done this operation
And knew ful many a scale of many a bonde
This myrrour eke that I haue in myn honde
Hath suche a might, that men may in it se
Whan there shal fallen any aduersite
Vnto your reigne, or to your self also
And openly se, who is your frende and foe
And ouer al this, if any lady bright
Hath set her herte on any maner wight
If he be false, she shal the treason se
His newe loue, and al his subtelte

So openly, that there shal nothyng hyde
Wherfore agayne this lusty somer tyde
This myrrour & this ryng, that ye may se
He hath sent to my lady Canace
Your excellent doughter that is here.
¶ The vertue of this ryngе, if ye wol here
Is this, that if she lyst it for to were
Upon her thombe, or in her purse it bere
There is no fowle, that fleeth vnder heuen
That she ne shal vnderstonde his steuen
And knowe his meanyng openlye and playne
And answere him in his langage agayne
And euery grasse that groweth vpon rote
She shal wel know, & whom it wol do bote
Al be his woundes neuer so depe and wyde.
¶ This naked swerde, þ hangeth by my syde
Such vertue hath, þ what man so ye smyte
Throughout his armure it wol kerue & byte
Were it as thicke as a braunched oke
And what man that is wounded vp the stroke
Shall neuer be hole, tyl that you list of grace
So stroken him with þ platte in thylke place
There he is hurt, this is as muche to sayne
Ye more with the platte swerde agayne
Stroken him in the wounde, & it wol close
This is very sothe withouten glose
It farleth not, whiles it is in your holde.
¶ Whā this knight hath thus his tale tolde
He rideth out of the halle, & down he lyght
His stede, which that shone as sonne bryght
Stante in the courte ryl as any stone
The knight is in to chambre ladde anone
He is vnarmed, and to the meate yfette
And al that harneys byfore him fette
This is to sain, the swerd & eke the myrrour
All borne was into the hye tour
With certayne officers ordeyned therfore
And to Canace the ryngе is bore
Solempnely, there she sate at the table
But sikerly without any fable
The horse of brasse, that may not be remeued
It stant, as it were to the ground yglewed
There may no man out of the place it dryue
For none engyne, or wyndlas, or polyue
And cause why, for they can not the craft
And therfore in the place they han it laft
Tyl þ the knight hath taught hem þ manere
To loren him, as ye shal after here.
¶ Strat was þ pres, that swarmed to & fro
To gauren on the horse, that stonden so
For it so hye was, & so brode and longe
So wel proporcyoned for to ben stronge
Right as it were a stede of Lumbardye
Therwith so horsly, and so quicke of eye
As it a gentle courser of Apoyle were
For certes, fro his tayle to his ere
Nature ne arte conde him not amende
In no degre, as al the people wende
But euermore her most wonder was
Howe that he couth gon, and was of bras
It was of fayrie, as the people semed
Diuers folke dyuersly they demed
As many heedes, as many wittes there be
They murmure, as doth a swarme of bees
And maden skyles after her fantesyes
Rehersyng of the olde poetryes
And sayden it was lyke the Pegase
The horse that had wynges for to flee
Or els it was the grekes horse Synon
That brought Troye to destruction
As men in this olde bokes rede.
¶ Myn herte (qd one) is euermore in drede
I trowe some men of armes ben therin
That shapen hem this cyte for to wyn
It were right good, þ such thinges were knowe
Er other towned to his feláwe lowe
And sayd he lyed, for it is rather lyke
Inappairence made by some magyke
As iogg'lours playen at these festes grete
Of sondry thoughtes, thus they iágle & trete
As lewde people demeth comenly
Of thynges that ben made more subtelly
Than they can in her lewdenesse comprehende
They demen gladly to the badder ende.
And some of hem wondren on the myrrour
That borne was vp to the mayster tour
How men myght in it suche thinges se.
And other answerd, certes it might wel be
Naturally by compositions
Of angels and of sly reflections
And sayden, in Rome was suche on
They spoken of Alocen and Vitilion
And Aristote, that writeth in her lyues
Of queynte myrrours, and of prospectiues
As knowen they that han her bokes herde.
And other folke han wondred on þ swerde
That þ olde pere through euery thyng
And fel in speche of Telophus the king
And of Achilles for his queynte spere
For he couthe with it hele and dere
Right in such wise as men may with the swerde
Of which right now ye haue your selue herde
They spoken of sondry hardyng of metal
And spoken of medycyns eke withal
And how, and whan it shulde hardned be
Which is vnknowe algate to me.

¶ Th

Tho spake they of Canaces ryng
And sayden al, that suche a wonder thyng
Of crafte of rynges herde they never non
Saue that Moses, and kyng Salomon
Had a name of conuyng of suche arte
Thus saien the people, and drawen hem aparte
But natheless, some sayden that it was
Wonder to maken of ferne asshen, glas
And yet is glas not lyke asshen of ferne
But for they han knowen it so ferne
Therfore they lesen her iaglyng and her wōder
Is soze wondrē some on cause of thunder
On ebbe and flud, on gossomer, and on myste
And on all thing, til the cause is wyste.
Thus iangleu they, and demen and deuyse
Tyll that the kynge gan fro his borde arise.
Phebus hath lefte the angle merydionall
And yet ascendyng was the beest royall
The gentle lyon with his Aldrian
Whan that this Tartre kynge Cambuscan
Rose from his bord, there as he sate full hye
Before him goth the loude minstralcye
Tyll he came to his chambre of paramentes
There as they sownen dyuers instrumentes
That is lyke an heuen for to here.
Now daunceu lusty Venus children dere
For in the fyshe her lady sat full hye
And loketh on hem with a frendly eye.
This noble king is set vpon his trone
This straunge knight is set to him ful sone
And in the daunce he goeth with Canace
Here is the reuel and the iolyte
That is not able a dull man to deuyse
He muste han knowe loue and her seruise
And ben a festlyche man, as freshe as May
That shuld you deuise suche array.
Who couthe tellen you ye forme of daunces
So uncouth, and so freshe countenaunces
Suche subtyl lokynges, and dyssymulynges
For drede of ialouse mens apperceyuynges
No man but Launcelot, and he is deed
Therfore I passe ouer al this lustyheed
I say no more, but in this iolynesse
I lete hem, tyl men to supper dresse.
The stewarde byddeth spices for to hye
And eke the wine, in all this melodye
The vshers and the squyers ben ygone
The spyces and the wine is comen anone
They eten and dronken, and whan this had an ende
Unto the temple, as reason was, they wende
The seruice is done, they soupen all by day
What nedeth it to rehersen her array
Eche man wot wel, that at a kynges feest
Is plenty, to the most and to the leest
And deyntes mo, than ben in my knowing
And after supper goeth this noble kyng
To seen this horse of brasse, with al his route
Of lordes and of ladies him aboute
Such wondrig ther was on this hors of bras
That sithen the great siege of Troye was
There as men wondred on an horse also
Ne was there such a wondryng, as was tho
But fynally, the kyng asketh the knight
The vertue of this horse and the myght
And praid him to tellen of his gouernaūce.
The horse anon gan to treppe and daunce
Whan ye this knight layde hond on his rayne
And said, sir there is no more to sayne
But whan you lyste to riden any where
Ye more tryll a pyn, stante in his ere
Whiche I shal tel you betwene vs two
Ye more nempne him to what place also
Or to what countre you lyst to ride
And whan ye come there you lyst abyde
Byd him discende, and tryll another pyn
For therin lyeth the effecte of all the gyn
And he wol downe discende, and don your wyll
And in that place he wol abyde styll
Though al ye world had the contrary swore
He shal not thens be ythrowe ne yborne
Or if you lyst bid him thens gon
Tryl this pyn, and he wol vanisshe anon
Out of the syght of euery maner wyght
And come ayen, be it day or nyght
Whan that you lyst to clepen him agayne
In such a gyse, as I shal to you sayne
Bytwyxt you and me, and that ful sone
Ryde whā you lyst ther nys no more to done
Enfourmed whan ye king was of ye knyght
And hath conceyued in his wit aryght
The maner and the forme of al this thing
Ful glad and ful blyth, the noble kyng
Repayreth to his reuel, as byforne
The bridel is with the toure yborne
And kept amonge his iewels lefe and dere
The horse vanished, I not in what maner
Out of her syght, ye get no more of me
But thus I lete in lust and iolyte
This Cambyscan, his lordes festyng
Tyl well nye the day began to spryng.

Explicit prima pars,
et sequitur pars
secunda.

The norrye of dygestyon, the
slepe
Gan on hem wynke, and bad
hem take kepe
That myrthe, drynke, and la-
bour wol haue reste
And with a galpyng mouth hem al he keste
And said, it was tyme to lye adoun
For blod was in his dominacioun
Cherissheth blod, natures frende (quod he)
They thanken him galping, by two by thre
And euery wight gan drawen him to his rest
As slepe hem bade, they toke it for the best.
Her dremes shul not now ben told for me
Ful were her beedes of rumolste
That causeth dremes, of whiche there is no charge
They slepen, til it was prime large
The most part, but it were Canace
Alle was ful mesurable, as women be
For of her father had she take her leue
To gon to rest, sone after it was eue
Her lyst not appalled for to be
Nor on the morowe, vnsolsyche for to se
And slept her first slepe, and awoke.
For suche a ioy she in her hert toke
Both of her queynt ringe, and of her mirrour
That twenty tymes she chaunged her colour
And in her slepe, right for impressyon
Of her mirrour, she had a vision
Wherfore, or the sonne vp gan glyde
She cleped her maistresses her beside
And said, her lust for to aryse.
¶ These olde women, that ben gladly wyse
As is her maistres, answered her anon
And said: madame, whider wol ye gon
Thus erly? for folke ben all in rest.
¶ I wol (quod she) aryse for me lyste
No lenger for to slepe, but walken aboute.
Her maistresse cleped women a great route
And vp they rise, wel ten or twelue
Vp ryseth fresshe Canace her selue
As ioly and bright, as the yonge sonne
That in the Ram is four degrees vp ronne
No hyghter was he, whan she redy was
And forthe she walketh an easye paas
Arrayed after the lusty season sote
Lightly for to playen, and to walken on fote
Nought but fyue or sixe of her meyne
And in a trenche, fer in the parke gothe she.
¶ The vapour, which ꝑ fro the erthe glode
Maketh the sonne to seme ruddy and brode
But nathelesse, it was so fayre a syght
That it made al her hertes for to lyght
What for the season, and for the morowning
And for the foules that she herde syng
For right anon, she wyste what they ment
Right by her songe, and knewe al her entent
¶ The knot why, that euery tale is holde
If it be taried tyl lust be colde
Of hem that han it herkened after yore
The sauour passeth, euer lenger the more
For fulsomnes of prolixite
And by the same reason thynketh me
I shulde vnto the same knot condiscende
And make of her walkyng sone an ende.
¶ Amydde a tre, for dyre as white as chalke
As Canace was playeng in her walke
There sat a falcon ouer her heed ful hye
That with a pitous voyce gan to crye
That all the wodde resowned of her cry
And beaten had her selfe so pitously
With both her winges, tyl the reed blode
Ran endelonge the tre, there as she stode
And euer in one, she cried and shright
And with her becke, her selfen so she pyght
That there nas Tygre, ne cruel beste
That dwelleth in wodde, eyther in foreste
That nolde han wept, if ꝑ they wepe coude
For sorow of her, she shright alway so loude
For there was neuer yet man on lyue
If that he couthe a faucon wel discryue
That herde of such another of fayrenesse
As wel of plumage, as of gentylnesse
Of shappe, of all that myght reckened be
A faucon peregryn than semed she
Of frende londe, and euermore as she stoode
She swouned now a now, for lacke of blode
Tyl wery is she fal fro the tree.
¶ This fayre kynges doughter, this Canace
That on her fynger bare the queynte ryng
Thrugh which she vnderstode wel euery thyng
That any foule may in his leden sayne
And coude answere him in his leden agayne
Hath vnderstande, what this faucon seyde
And wery for routhe almost she deyde
And to the tree she gothe ful hastely
And on this faucon loketh ful pitously
And helde her lappe abrode, for wel she wiste
The faucon must fallen from the twyste
Wha ꝑ she swouned nere, for lacke of blode
A longe while to wayten there she stoode
Tyl at the last she spake in this manere
Vnto the hauke, as ye shalen after here.
¶ What is the cause, if it be for to telle
That ye ben in this furyal payne of helle
Quod Canace, vnto this hauke aboue

this for sorowe of death, or losse of loue
as I trowe, these ben causes two
hat causen most a gentyl hert wo
other harme it nedeth not to speke
ye vpon your selfe you wreke
hich proueth wel, that either ire or drede
ote ben encheson of your cruel dede
yn that I se none other wyght you chace
the loue of god, so doth your selfe grace
what may be your helpe, for west or est
e sawe I neuer er now, no wyde ne beest
hat farde with him selue so pytously
e slee me with your sorow verily
haue of you so great compassioun
or goddes loue come fro the tre adown
nd as I am a kynges doughter trewe
f that I verely the causes knewe
f your disease, if it lay in my myght
wolde amende it, certes or it be nyght
s wisely helpe me great god of kynde
nd herbes shall I right ynowe finde
o hele with your hurtes hastely.
Tho shright this faucon yet more spitously
than euer she dyd, and fell to grounde anone
nd lyeth a swoune dede as is a stone
Cyll Canace hath in her lappe itake
nto the tyme she gan of swoune awake
nd after that she of swoune gan abreyde
right in her haukes leden thus she seyde
That pite renneth soone in gentyl hert
feling his semilitude in paynes smert)
s proued al day, as men may se
s wel by werke as by authorite
or gentil hert kepeth gentylnesse
I se wel, that ye haue of my distresse
Compassion, my faire Canace
Of very womanly benygnite
That nature in your principles hath sette
But for non hope for to fare the bette
But for to obey vnto your hert free
nd for to make other beware by me
s by the whelpe chastised is the Lion
Right for that cause, and for that conclusion
While that I haue a leyser and a space
Myne harme I wol confessen or I pace
nd euer while that one her sorowe tolde
That other wepte, as she to water wolde
Til that the faucon badde her to be stylle
nd with a sike, thus she sayd her tylle.
I There I was bredde, alas that ilke day
And fostred in a roche of marble gray
So tenderly, that nothing eyleth me
I se, wel what was aduersite
Tyl I coude flye, ful hie vnder the skye
There dwelt a Tercelet me fast by
That semed wel of all gentilnesse
All were he ful of trayson and of falsnesse
It was so wrapped vnder humble chere
And vnder hewe of trouth, and in suche manere
Vnder plesaunce, and vnder busy payn
That no wight coud haue wende he coud fayn
So depe in grayne he died his colours
Right as a serpent hideth him vnder flours
Til he may se his time for to bite
Right so, this god of loues ipocrite
Doth so his seremones and obeysaunce
Wyth his dissimulyng, and faire assemblaunce
That somneth vnto gentilnesse of loue
As in a tombe is all the faire aboue
And vnder the cors, suche as ye wote
Suche was this ipocrite colde and hote
And in this wise he serued his entent
That saue ye fende, non wyst what he ment
Til he so long had woped and complayned
And many a yere his seruyce to me yfayned
Tyl that myn hert, to pitous and to nyce
All innocent of his cruel malyce
For ferde of his deth, as thought me
Vpon his othes and his surete
Graunted him loue, vpon this condition
That euermore myne honour and my renoun
Were saued, bothe preuy and apert
This is to say, that after his desert
I saue him al min hert and al my thought
God wote, and in other wise nought
And toke his hert in chaunge of myn for aye
But soothe is said, gone sithen many a day
A trewe wight and a theef thenketh not one
And when he sawe he might me not gone
That I graunted him fully my loue
In suche a gise, as I haue said aboue
And yeuen him my true hert as free
As he swore he yaf his hert to me
Anon this tigre, ful of doublenesse
Fyl on his knees with so deuout humblesse
So lyke a gentyl louer, as of manere
So rauyshed, as it semed for sore
That neuer Troylus, ne Paris of Troy
Jason certes, ne non other man
Syn Lamech was, that alderfirst began
To louen two, as writen folke beforne
Ne neuer sithen Adam was borne
Ne couthe man by twenty thousande parte
Counterfete the sophymes of his arte
Ne were worthy to vnlace his galoche

Ther doubleneſſe or fayntyng ſhuld approche
Ne ſo couth thanke a wight, as he dyd me
His maner was an hewen for to ſe
Tyl any woman, were ſhe neuer ſo wyſe
So paynteth he his chere poynt deuyſe
As wel his wordes, as his countenaunce
And I ſo loued him for his obeyſaunce
And for the trouthe that I demed in his hert
That if ſo were, that any thyng him ſmert
Al were it neuer ſo lyte, and I it wyſt
Me thought I felt deth at my hert twiſt
And ſhortly, ſo ferforth this thing went
That my wyll was his wylles inſtrument
That is to ſaye, my wyl obeyed his wyll
In all thing, as ferre as reaſon fyll
Kepyng the boundes of my worſhip euer
Ne neuer had I thyng ſo leſe ne ſoleuer
As him god wote, ne neuer ſhal no mo
This laſt lenger then a yere or two
That I ſuppoſed of him nothing but good.
But finally, thus at the laſt it ſtode
That fortune wold that he muſt twyn
Out of that place, which that I was in
Where me was wo, it is no queſtion
I can not make of it diſcryption
For o thyng dare I tell boldely
I knowe what the payne of deth is therby
Such harm I felte, that he ne myght beleue
So on a day of me he toke his leue
So ſorowfully eke, that I wende verely
That he had felte as moche harm as I
But whā that I herd him ſpeke, and ſaw his hewe
But natheles, I thought he was ſo trewe
And eke that he repaire ſhulde againe
Within a lytell while ſothe to ſayne
And reaſon wold eke, that he muſt go
For his honour, as ofte happeth ſo
That I made vertue of neceſſite
And toke it well, ſithe it muſt nedes be
As I beſt might, I hidde fro him my ſorowe
And toke him by the hond, S. John to borowe
And ſaid thus: lo I am yours all
Both ſuche as I haue ben to you and ſhall
What he anſwerd, it nedeth not reherce
Who can ſayn bet than he, who can do wers-
Whā he hath al wel ſayd, than hath he done
Therfore behoueth him a longe ſpone
That ſhal eten wt a fende, thus herde I ſay
So at the laſt he mote forth his way
And forth he ſteeth tyl he come there him leſt
Whan it come him to purpoſe for to reſt
I trowe he had thilke text in mynde
That al thing repairing to his kynde
Gladeth hem ſelue, thus ſayn men as I geſſe
Men louen of kinde newfangleneſſe
As briddes don, that men in cages fede
For though the night a day take of hem hede
And ſtrawe her cage faire and ſofte as fyne
And gyue hem ſugre, hony, bred and wyne
Yet tyght anon as his doze is vp
He with his fete wold ſpourne adown his cup
And to the wood he wold, and wormes eate
So newfangle ben they of her meate
And louen noueltes of proper kynde
No gentyneſſe of blode may hem bynde
So ferde this Tercelet, alas the day
Tho he were gentel borne, freſſhe and gay
And goodly for to ſe, and humble and free
He ſawe vpon a tyme a kyte flee
And ſodainly he loued this kyte ſo
That al his loue is clene fro me go
And hath his trouth falſed in this wiſe
Thus hath the kyte my loue in her ſeruice
And I am lorne without remedy.
And with the worde this faucon gan to cry
And ſwouned ofte in Canaces barme
Gret was the ſorowe for the haukes harme
That Canace, and al her women made
They wiſt how they might her faucon glade
But Canace home beareth here in her lappe
And ſoftely in plaiſters gan her wrappe
There as ſhe with her becke had hurt her ſelue
Now can not Canace but herbes delue
Out of the grounde and make ſalues newe
Of herbes precious and fyne of hewe
To helen with the hauke fro day to nyght
She dothe her buſyneſſe, and al her myght
And by her beddes heed ſhe made a mewe
And couered it with velucttes blewe
In ſygne of trouthe, that is in women ſene
And al without the Mewe is paynted grene
In which were paynted all theſe falſe foules
As ben theſe ryuers, tercelettes, and owles
Ryght for diſpyte were paynted hem beſyde
Pyes on hem for to cry and chyde.
This leue I Canace her hauke kepynge
I wol no more as now ſpeke of her tynge
Tyl it come eſte to purpos for to ſayn
How that this faucon gate her loue agayn
Repentaunt, as the ſtory telleth vs
By mediation of Camballus
The kynges ſonne, of whiche I of tolde
But henſforthe I wol my proces holde
To ſpeken of auentures, and of batayls
That yet was neuer herd of ſo grete marueils.
Firſt wol I tel you of Cambuſcan

That

That in his tyme many a cite wan
Nowe that he wan Thedora to hys wyfe
And after woll I speake of Algarsife
For whom full oft in great perill he was
Were had he ben holpen by the horse of bras
And after woll I speake of Cambullo
That fought in lystes with the brethren two
For Canace, er that he might her wyn
And there I left, I woll agayn begyn.

¶ Explicit secunda pars,

Appollo whirleth vp hys chare so hye
Vntil that the god Mercurius house he flye.

¶ There can be founde no more of thys forsayd tale, whiche hathe ben sought in diuers places.

¶ Here folowyth the wordes of the Marchaunte to the Squier, and the wordes of the Hoste to the Marchaunte.

In faryth Squier, thou haste the wel iquit
And gentely, I prayse well thy wit
Quod the Marchant, considering thyne youth
So feelingly thou spekest, I the alouth
Is to my dome, there is non that is here
Of eloquence, that shalbe thy pere
As thou liue, god geue the right good chaūce
And in vertue sende the perseueraunce
For of thy spekyng I haue great deynte
I haue a sonne, and by the Trinite
I had leuer than twēty poude worth londe
(Though it nowe were fallen in my honde)
He were a man of such discrecion
As that ye ben: fye on possession
But yf a man be vertuous with all
I haue my sonne snybbed, and yet shall
For he to vertue listeth nat to entende
But for to play at dyse, and to spende
And lese all that he hathe, is hys vsage
And he had leuer talke with a page
Than to cōmen with any gentyll wyght
Where he might lerne gentelnesse aryght
Strawe for your gērynesse (qd our host)
What Marchant, pardy wel thou wost
That eche of you mote tellen at the lest
A tale or two, or breken your behest
That know I well (qd the marchāt) certain
I pray you haue me nat in disdain
Though I to this mā spoke a word or two

¶ Tell on thy tale withouten wordes mo
Gladly sir host (quod he) I woll obey
Vnto your will, now herkeneth what I sey
I wol you not contrary in no wyse
As farre as my wyttes may suffice
I pray to god that it may plesen you
Than wote I well, it is good ynow.

¶ Thus endeth the wordes of the host and the marchant, and here folowyth the Marchaunts prologue.

Wepynge and waylyng, care and other sorowe
I haue ynowe, bothe eue and eke a morowe
Quod the Marchant, and so haue other mo
That wedded be, I trowe that it be so
For well I wote it fareth so by me
I haue a wyfe, the worst that may be
For though the fende coupled to her were
She wold hi ouermatch I dare well swere
What shoulde I reherse in speciall
Her high malice, she is a shrewe at all
There is a longe and a large difference
Betwixte Grisildes great pacience
And of my wyfe the passyng cruelte
Were I vnbounde, also mote I the
I wouldē neuer efte come in the snare
We wedded men lyue in sorowe and care
Assay who so woll, and he shall fynde
That I say soth, by saynt Thomas of Inde
As for the more parte, I say not all
God shelde that it shoulde so befall
Ah good sir host, I haue wedded be
These monethes two, and more not parde
And yet I trowe he that all hys lyfe
Hath wedded be, though men hym ryfe
Into the herte, ne couthe in no manere
Tell so muche sorowe, as I nowe here
Conde tell, of my wyues cursednesse
Nowe qd our host marchāt so god ꝙ blesse
Syn ye ben so muche knowe of that arte
Ful hertely I pray you tell vs parte
Gladly quod he, but of myn owne sore
For sory hert I tell may no more.

¶ Here endeth the Marchaunte prologue, and here folowyth hys tale.

WHylom there was dwel-
lyng in Lumbardy
A worthy knyght, that
borne was at Pauy
In whiche he lyued in
grate prosperite
And sixty yere a wifles
man was he
And folowed aye hys bodely delyte
On women, there as was his appetyte
As don these folys that ben seculers
And when that he was paste sixty yeres
Were it for holynesse or dotage
I can nat sayn, but suche a great corage
Had thys knyght to ben a wedded man
That day and nyght he doth all that he can
To espy, where that he wedded might be
Prayeng our lorde to graunten him that he
Myghten ones knowen of that blisful lyfe
That betwixt an husbonde and hys wyfe
And for to lyuen vnder that holy bonde
With which god first man a woman bonde
Non other lyfe (sayd he) is worthe a bean
For wedlocke is so easy and so clean
That in this worlde it is a paradise
Thus sayth this olde knight that is so wise.
And certaynly, as sothe as god is kyng
To take a wyfe, it is a glorious thyng
And namely when a man is olde and hore
Than is a wyfe the fruite of hys tresore
Than shuld he take a yonge wife and a faire
On which he might engendren him an heire
And lede hys lyfe in ioy and in solace
Where as these bachelers singen alas
When that they fynden any aduersite
In loue, whiche nys but childes vanyte
And trewely it sytte well to be so
That bachelers han ofte payne and wo
On brotell grounde they bylden brotelnesse
They fynd freelte, whā they wenē sekernesse
They lyue but as byrdes or bestes
In liberty, and vnder nyce arestes
There as a wedded man in hys estate
Lyueth a lyfe blessfully and ordinate
Vnder the yoke of mariage ybounde
Wel may his hert in ioye & blysse habounde
For who can be so buromc as a wyfe
Who is so trewe and eke so ententyfe
To kepe hym sicke and hole as is his make
For wel no wo she nyll hym not forsake
She nys not worry hym to loue and serue
Though that he lye bedrede tyll he sterue
And yet some clerkes sayn, that it is nat so
Of whiche Theophrast is one of tho
What force though Theophrast lyst to lye
Ne take no wyfe (qd he) for husbondrye
As for to spare in housholde thy despence
A trewe seruaunt doth more diligence
Thy good to kepe, than thyn owne wyfe
For she wol clayme halfe parte all her lyfe
And yf that thou be sicke, so god me saue
Thy very frendes or a trewe knaue
Wol kepe the better, than she ẏ wayteth aye
After thy good, and hath don many a daye
And yf thou take a wyfe to the buttewe
Full ofte tyme it shall the sore rewe
This sentence, and an hundred sithes worse
Writeth this man there, god his bones curse
But take no kepe of suche vanyte
Defieth Theophrast, and herkeneth me.
A wyfe is goddes yefte verely
All other maner yeftes hardely
As londes, rentes, pasture, or cōmune
Or mouables, all ben yeftes of fortune
That passen, as a shadowe on a wall
But dred nat, yf playnly speke I shall
A wyfe wol laste and in thyn house endure
Wel lenger than thy lyst paraventure
Marriage is a full great sacrament
He whiche hath no wyfe I holde hym shent
He lyueth helples, and all desolate
I speke of folke, in seculer estate.
And herkeneth why, I say not this for nought
A woman is for mannes helpe ywrought
The hye god, when he had Adam maked
And sawe hym alone bely naked
God of hys great goodnesse sayd than
Lette vs maken an helpe to thys man
Lyke to hym selfe, and than he made Eue
Here may ye se, and herby may ye preue
That a wyfe is mans helpe and comforte
his paradise terrestre and his disporte
So buxome and so bertuous is she
They must nedes lyue in vnyte
One flesche they ben, a two soules as I gesse
Nat but one hert in wele and in distresse
A wyfe, ah saynt Mary, benedicite
Howe might a man haue any aduersite
That hath a wyfe certes I can nat say
The blysse that is betwixte hem twey
There may no tonge telle or herte thynke
If he be pore, she helpeth hym to swynke
She kepeth his good, wasteth neuer a dell
All that her husbonde lyste, her lyketh well
She sayth nat ours nay, when he sayth ye
Do this (sayth he) al ret dy sir (sayth she)

O blyssfull ordre of wedlocke precious
Thou arte so mery, and eke so vertuous
And so cõmended, and so approued eke
That euery man, that hath him worth a leke
Upon his bare knees ought all hys lyfe
Thanken god, that him hath sent a wyfe
Or pray to god him for to sende
A wyfe, to last vnto hys lyues ende
For than his lyfe is set in sekernesse
He may not be disceyued, as I gesse
So that he werche after hys wyues rede
Than may he boldely bearen vp his hede
They ben so trewe and also wyse
For which, if thou wilt werchen as the wise
Do alway so, as women woll the rede
Lo how that Jacob, as these clerkes rede
By good counsayle of his mother Rebecke
Bounde the kydde skyn about hys necke
For whiche his fathers beneson he wan
Lo Judith, as the storye tell can
By wyse counsayle goddes people kept
And slewe hym Holofernes whyle he slept
Lo Abigail by counsayle, howe she
Saued her husbonde Naball, whan that he
Shulde haue be slayne. And loke hester also
By good counsayle delyuered out of wo
The people of god, & made hym Mardochee
Of Assure enhaunsed for to bee.
There nys nothyng in gree superlatyfe
(As sayeth Senec) aboue an humble wyfe
Suffre thy wyues tonge, as Caton bit
She shal cõmaunde, and thou shalt suffre it
And yet she woll obey of curtesy.
A wife is keper of thyne husbondry
Well may the sicke man wayle and wepe
There as ther nis no wife the house to kepe
I warne the, yf wisely thou wylt werche
Loue thy wife, as Christ loueth his chirche
If thou loue thy selfe, thou louest thy wyfe
No no man hateth his flesche: but in his lyfe
He fostreth it, and therfore bydde I the
Cherysche thy wyfe, or thou shalt neuer i the
Husbõde and wife, what so men iape or play
Of worldly folke holde the seker way
They be so knyt, ther may non harme betide
And namely vpon the wyues side
For whiche January, of which I tolde
Considred hath in hys dayes olde
The lusty lyfe, the vertuous quiete
That is in mariage hony swete
And for hys frendes on a day he sent
To tellen hem the effect of his entent.
With face sadde, his tale hath he hem tolde
He said frendes, I am hoore and olde
And almost (god wot) on the pittes brinke
Upon my soule somwhat must I thynke
I haue my body foolyly dispended
Blessed be god, it shal ben amended
For I woll ben certayne a wedded man
And that anon in all the hast I can
Unto some mayde, faire and tender of age
I pray you shapeth for my marriage
All sodaynly, for I woll nat abyde
And I woll fonden to espye on my syde
To whom I may be wedded hastely
But for as muche as ye ben more than I
Ye shullen rather suche a thyng espyen
Than I, and therfore me lust best to aryen
But one thing warne I you my frendes dere
I woll non olde wife haue in no manere
She shall not passe fyftene yere certayn
Olde fissh & yong flesshe wol I haue fayn
Better is (qd he) a pyke than a pikerell
And better than olde beef is the tender veell
I wol no woman of thirty wynter age
It nys but branstrawe and great forage
And eke these olde widowes (god it wote)
They connen so muche craft in wades bote
So muche broken harme whan hem lyst
That with hem shuld I neuer lyue in rest
For sondry scholes maketh subtyl clerkes
A woman of many scholes halfe a clerke is
But certainly, a yonge thing may men gye
Right as men may warm wex with hondes plye
Wherfore I say you plainly in a clause
I wyl non olde wife haue for this cause.
For if so were that I had mischaunce
And in her corage haue no pleasaunce
Than shuld I lede my lyfe in auoutry
And so streyght to the deuyll when I dye
No children shulde I non vpon her geten
Yet had I leuer houndes had me eten
Than that myne heritage shuld fall
In straunge hondes: and thus I tell you all
I dote nat, I wotte the cause why
Men shuld wedden, and furthermore wot I
There speketh many a man of mariage
That wot no more of this than doth my page
For whiche causes men shulde take a wife
If he may nat lyuen chast his lyfe
Take him a wife with great deuocion
Because of lefull procreacion
Of children, to y honour of god aboue
And not only for paramour or for loue
And for they shulden lechery eschewe
And yelde her dettes whan that it is dewe

Or for that eche man shuld helpen other
In myschefe, as a suster shuld the brother
And lyue in chastite ful heuenly.
¶ But sirs (by your leque) that am nat I
For god be thanked, I dare make auaunt
I fele my lymmes hole and sufficiaunt
To don all that a man belongeth to
I wotte my selue best what I may do
Though I be hore, I fare as doth a tree
That blossometh er that frute ywore be
The blossomed tree is neither dry ne deed
I fele no where hore but on my heed
Myn hert and my lymmes bene as grene
As laurell is through the yere to sene
And sithen that ye han herde all myn entent
I pray you to my wyll ye wol assent.
Diuers men diuersly him tolde
Of mariage, many ensamples olde
Some blameth it, some prayseth is certayne
But at the last, shortly for to sayne
(As al day falleth altercacion
Betwixt frendes in disputacion)
There fel a strife betwixt his brethren two
Of which that one was cleped Placebo
Justynus soothly called was that other
¶ Placebo said: O January brother
Ful lytel nede han ye my lorde so dere
Counsaile to axe of any that is here
But that ye ben so ful of sapience
That you ne lyketh for your hye prudence
To dryue fro the worde of Salomon
This worde sauthe he vnto Rutthone
Worke al thing by counsayle, thus said he
And than shalt thou nat repent the
But tho that Salomon spake suche a worde
Myn owne dere brother and my lorde
So wisely god my soule bringe to ease & rest
I holde your owne counsayle for the best.
For brother myne, take of me this moryse
I haue ben now a court man al my lyse
And god wote, though I nowe vnworthy be
I haue stonden in ful great degre
Abouen lordes in full great estate
Yet had I neuer with non of hem debate
I neuer hem contraried trewly
I wot wel that my lorde can more than I
That he saith, I holde it ferme and stable
I say the same, or els thinge semblable
A ful great fole is any counsaylour
That streueth any lorde of hys honour
That dare presume, or ones thynke it
That his counsayle shuld passe his lordes wyt
Nay, lordes be no foles be my fay
Ye haue your selfe spoken here to day
So hye sentence, so holy, and so well
That I consent, and conferme euery dell
Your wordes all, and your opinyon
By god there nys no man in all this town
Ne in Itayle, coude bette haue sayd
Christ holdeth hym of this ful wel a payd
And trewely it is an hye corage
Of any man that is stopen in age
To taken a yonge wyfe, by my father kyn
Your hert hongeth on a holy pyn
Doth now in this matere right as you lest
For fynally I holde it for the best.
¶ Justinus that aye satte and herde
Right in this wyse to Placebo he answerde
Nowe brother myne be patient I you pray
Sith ye haue sayd, now herkneth what I say
¶ Seneca amonge other wordes wyse
Sayth, that a man ought hym wel auyse
To whom he yeueth his londe or his catell
And sithens I ought auyse me right well
To whom I gyue my goodes away from me
Wel muche more I ought auysed be
To whom I gyue my body: for alway
I warne you well it is no childes play
To take a wyfe without auysement
Men must enquere (this is myn assent)
Whether she be sobre, wise, or dronkelewe
Or proude, or other wayes a shrewe
A chyder, or a waster of thy good
Other ryche or poore, or els a man is wood
Al be it so, that no man fynd shall
Non in thys worlde, that trotteth hole in all
Ne man, ne best, suche as men can deuyse
But nathelesse, it ought ynough suffice
With any wyfe, if so were that she hadde
Mo good thewes, than her vyces badde
And all thys asketh layser to enquere
For god wotte I haue wept many a tere
Full priuely, sithe I had a wyfe
Prayse who so wol a wedded mannes life
Certeyn I fynde in it but cost and care
And obseruaunces of all blysses bare
And yet god wotte, my neighbours about
And namely of women many a rout
Sayn that I haue the most stedfast wyfe
And eke the meekest one that beareth lyfe
But I wot best, where wringeth me my sho
Ye may for me, ryght as you lyst do
Auyse you, ye ben a man of age
Howe that ye entren into marryage
And namely with a yonge wyfe and a fayr
By him that made water, erth, and ayre

The

The yongest man that is in all thys route
Is besy ynowe to bringe it about
To haue his wyfe alone, trusteth me
Ye shall nat pleasen her yeres thre
Thys is to sayn, to don her plesaunce
A wife asketh full muche obseruaunce
I praye you that ye be not euyll apayde.
Wel (qd this January) a bast thou al saide
Strawe for thy Senec, & for thy prouerbes
I count it not worth a pannyer of herbes
Of scole termes, wiser men than thou
As thou hast herde, assenteth it right nowe
To my purpose Placebo, what say ye
I say it is a cursed man (quod he)
That letteth matrymony ie seyre
And with that worde they risen sodaynlye
And ben assented fully, that he shoulde
Be wedded whe hym lyst, & where he wolde
Highe fantasy and curiousnesse
Fro day to day, gan in the soule empresse
Of January, about hys maryage
Many faire shappe, and many faire visage
Ther passeth thrugh his hert night by night
As who so toke a myrrour polished bright
And sette it in a comen market place
Than shulde he se many a sygure pace
By hys myrrour, and in the same wyse
Gan January within his thought deuyse
Of maydens, whiche that dwellen besyde
He wyst not where he might abyde
For yf that one had beauty in her face
Another stont so in the peoples grace
For her sadnesse and her benignyte
That of the people greatest voyce had she
And some were ryche and had badde name
But netheles, betwixt ernest and game
He at last apoynted hym on one
And lette all other from his hert gone
And chese her of hys owne authorite
For loue is blynde al day, and may not se
And whe that he was in his bedde brought
He purreyde in his hert and in his thought
Her fresshe beaute, and her age tender
Her myddle small, her armes longe & slender
Her wyse gouernaunce, and her gentylnesse
Her womanly bearyng, and her sadnesse
And when he was on her condiscended
Him thought his choise might nat be amended
For when that he him selfe concluded had
Him thought eche other mennes wit so bad
That impossible it were to reply
Ayenst hys choice, this was his fantasy
This frendes sent he to, at his instaunce
And prayeth hem to don him that plesaunce
That hastely they wolde to him come
He wolde bredgen her labour all and some
Nedeth no more for him to go ne ryde
He was appoynted there he wolde abyde
Placebo came, and eke his frendes some
And alderfirst he badde hem all a bone
That non of hem non argumentes make
Ayenst his purpose that he hath take
Which purpose was plesant to god (sayd he)
And very grounde of his prospecte.
He sayd there was a mayden in the town
Whiche of beauty hath great renoun
All were it so, he were of smal degre
Suffiseth him her vought and her beauty
Which mayd he sayd, he wold haue to wife
To leden in ease and in honeste hys life
And thanketh god, ý he might haue her all
That no wight his blisse parten shall
And prayeth hem to labour in thys nede
And shapeth that he fayle nat to spede
For than he sayd, his spirite was at ease
Than is (qd he) nothyng may me displease
Saue o thyng pricketh in my conscience
The whiche I will reherse in your presence
I haue (quod he) herde sayefull vorage
There may no man haue parfite blisses two
This is to sayn, in erthe and eke in heuen
For though he kept him fro the lustes fiuen
And eke from euery braunce of thilke vice
Yet is there so parfite prospervte
And so great ease and lust in maryage
That euer I am agast nowe in myn age
That I shall lede nowe so merry a lyfe
So delicate without wo or stryfe
That I shal haue inme heuen mi erth here
For sithen very heuen is bought so dere
With tribulacion and great penaunce
Nowe should I than liuing in such plesaunce
As all wedded men don with their wyues
Come to ý blisse, ther Christ eterne on liue is
This is my drede, and ye my brethren twey
Assoyleth me this question I you prey.
Justinus, whiche that hated hys folye
Answerd anon right in his iapery
And for he wolde his longe tale abrege
He wolde non authorite allege
But sayd: sir, so there be non obstacle
Other than this, god of his hye miracle
And of his mercy may so for you werche
That er ye han your rightes of holy cherche
Ye may repent of wedded mannes life
In whiche ye sayn is neyther wo ne stryfe

And

And els god forbede, but yf he sent
A wedded man grace hym to repent
Wel after, rather than a single man
And therfore sir, the best rede that I can
Dispeyreth you not, but haue in memory
Paraunenture she may be your purgatory
She may by goddes meane a goddes whip
Than shall your soule vp to heuen skip
Swifter then doth an arowe out of a bowe
I hope to god hereafter ye shall knowe
That there nys non so great felicite
In maryage, ne neuer non shall be
That you shal lette of your saluacion
So that ye vse it as skyll is and reason
The lustes of your wife attemperatly
And that ye please her nat to amorously
And that ye kepe you eke fro other syn
My tale is don, for my witte is thyn
Beth nat agaste hereof my dere brother
But lete vs wade fro this mater to another
The wife of Bathe, yf ye vnderstande
Of maryage, whiche ye haue in hande
Declareth full well in a lytell space
Fareth nowe wel, god haue yeuin his grace.

And vpon thys worde, Iustine a his brother
Han take her leaue, and eche of hem of other
For when they sawe it must nedes be
They wrought so by wise and sly treate
That she this mayde whiche May hight
As hastely as euer that she myght
Shall wedded be to thys January
I nowe it were to long to you tary
Yf I you tolde of euery escrypte and bonde
By whiche she was fetted in hys londe
Or for to herken of her ryche araye
But finally icomen is the day
That to chirche bothe ben they went
For to receyue the holy sacrament
Forth cometh ỳ prest, vpon stole about his neck
And badde her be lyke Sara and Rebeck
In wisedome and trueth of maryage
And sayd his orisons, as is the vsage
And crouched hem, & bad god shuld hem bles
And made all seker ynowe with holynes
Thus ben they wedded with solempnite
And at feest sitteth he and she
With other worthy folke vpon the deyes
Al full of ioye and blysse is the paleyes
And ful of instrumentes and of vitayle
The most deyntes of all Itayle
Before him stode instrumētes of such sown
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion
Ne made neuer such a melody.

At euery cours came loude mynstralcy
That neuer Ioab tromped for to here
Neither Theodomas yet half so clere
At Thebes, when the cite was in dout
Bacchus the wyne hem skynketh all about
And Venus laugheth on euery wight
For January was become her knyght
And wolde bothe assayn hys corage
In liberte, and eke in mariage
And with her fire bronde in her honde about
Daunceth before the bryde and al the rout
And certaynly, I dare well saye right this
Emenius that god of wedding is
Saw neuer i his life, so mery a wedded man

Holde thou thy peace thou poet Marcian
That writest vs that ilke wedding mery
Of Philology and hym Mercury
And of the songes that the Muses songe
To smal is both thy penne & eke thy tonge
For to discriuen of thys maryage
whē tender youth hath wedded stouping age
There is such mirth, ỳ it may nat be writte
Assayeth your selfe, than may ye witten
If that I lacke or non in thys matere

May that sytte, with so benigne a chere
Her to beholde, it semed fayrye
Queene Hester loked neuer with such an eye
On Assuere, so meke a loke hath she
I may you nat deuise al her beaute
But thus muche of her beauty tel I may
That she was lyke ỳ bright morow of may
Fulfilde of all beauty, and of pleasaunce

Thys January is rauysshed in a traunce
And at euery tyme he loked in her face
But in hys hert, he gan her to manace
That he ỳ night, i his armes wold her streyn
Harder, than euer Paris dyd Helen
But natheles, yet had he great pety
That thilke myght, offende her muste he
And thought alas, O tender creature
Nowe wolde god ye might well endure
All my corage, it is so sharpe and kene
I am agast, ye shall it nat sustene
But god forbede, that I dyd all my myght
Nowe wolde god that it were ware myght
And that the myght wolde laste euer mo
I wolde that all these people were ago
And finally he doth all hys labour
As he best myght, sauyng hys honour
To hast hem fro the meate in subtyll wyse
The tyme came, that reason was to ryse
And after that men daunsen, & drynke fast
And spices all about the house they cast

And

nd ful of ioye & blysse is euery man
l but a squyer, that hyght Damyan
ych carfe before the knyght many a day
e was so rauished on his lady May
that for very payne he was ny wode
lmost he swelt, and swouned there he stode
o sore hath Venus hurt him w̄ her brāde
o freshe she was, and therto so lycande
nd to his bedde he went him hastely
o more of him at this time spekē I
ut there I let him wepe ynowe and playne
il the fresh May wol rewen on his payne.
O perilous fire, ỹ in the bedstrawe bredeth
familyer foe, that his seruice bedeth
seruaunt traytour, false homely hewe
lyke to the adder slye in bosome vntrewe
January dronken in pleasaunce
od shyld vs all from your iniquitaunce
of mariage, se howe this Damian
thyne owne seruere and thy bozne man
ernderth to don the villany
od graunt the thyn homely foe to espye
for in this world nys wers pestilence
than homely foe, al day in thy presence
parfourmed hath ỹ fun his arke dyurne
o lenger may the body of him soiourne
n ouſont, as in that latitude
ight with his mantyl, that is darke & rude
an for to sprede, the hemysperye about
for whiche departed is the lusty rout
fro January, with thonke on euery syde
ome to her house lustely they ryde
there as they don her thynges, as them lest
nd whan they sawe her tyme to go to rest
Sone after this lusty January
roll go to bedde, he wold no lenger tary
e dronken hipocras, clarrey, and vernage
of spices hote, to encrease his corage
nd many a lectuary had he ful fyne
such as the cursed monke dan Cōstantine
hath writeten in his boke of Coitu
Coeten hem al he nolde nothynge eschewe
nd thus to his priuy frendes said he
for goddes loue, as sone as it may be
et voyde al this house in curteys wyse sone
Whē dronken, and the trauers dre we anon
o hasted January, it must be done
he bryde was brought to bed as stil as ston
nd whan the bed was with ỹ priest iblessed
out of ỹ chābre hath euery wight hem dressed
nd January hath fast in armes take
is freshe May, his paradise, his make
e lulleth her, he kysseth her full ofte
With thicke bristels of his berde vnsofte
Like ỹ skin of houdfysh, as sharp as brere
for he was shaue al newe in his manere
he rubbeth her vpon her tender face
And said thus: Alas, I mote trespace
To you my spouse, and you greatly offende
Or time come that I wol down discende
But natheles, consideryth this (q̄d he)
There nys no workeman, what so euer he be
That may both worche wel and hastely
This wol be don at leyser parfitly
It is no force howe longe that we play
In trewe wedlocke coupled be we tway
And blessed be the yoke that we been in
for in our actes we mowe do no syn
A man may do no synne with his wife
Ne hurte him selfe with his owne knyfe
for we haue leaue to play vs by the lawe
Thus labouryth he, ryl the day gan dawe
And than he taketh a soppe in fyne clarre
And vpright in his bedde than syttyth he
And after that he syngeth full loude and clere
And kyst his wife, and maketh wanton chere
He was all coltysh, and ful of ragery
And full of gergon, as is a flecked pye
The slacke skyne about his necke shaketh
Whyle that he sang, so chaunteth he & craketh
But god wot what May thought whyle he
Whan she him sawe, vp sittyng in his bed
In his night cappe, with his necke lene
She prayseth not his playeng worth a bene
Than said he thus: my rest wol I take
Now day is come, I may no lenger wake
And down he layde his hed, & slept ryl prime
And afterward, whan that he sawe his tyme
Up ryseth January, but the freshe May
Holdeth her chambre to the fourth day
As vsage is of wyues for the best
for euery labour somtyme moste haue rest
Or elis longe may he not endure
This is to say, no lyues creature
Be it fisshe or beest, bridde or man
Now wol I speke of wofull Damyan
That langureth for loue, as ye shall here
Therefore I speke to him in this manere.
I say, O sely Damian, alas
Answere to this demaunde, as in this cas
Howe shalt thou to thy lady freshe May
Tell thy wo, she wol alway say nay
Eke if thou spekest, she wol thy wo bewray
God be thyn helpe, I can no better say
This sicke Damian in Venus fyre
So brenneth, that he dyeth for desyre

For which he put his lyfe in auenture
No lenger might he in this wise endure
But priuely a penner gan he borowe
And in a letter wrote he al his sorowe
In maner of a complaynt or a lay
Unto this faire and freshe lady May
And in a purse of silke, hongynge on his sherte
He hath it put, and layde it at his herte
The more at noon ryde that ilke day
(That January hath ywedded freshe May)
Out of Taure was in the Cankre gleden
So long hath May in her chambre bidden
As custome is, unto these nobles all
A bride shal not eaten in the hall
Tyl dayes four, or thre at the leste
Ypassed ben, than let her gon to reste.
The fourth day cõplete fro noon to noon
Whan that the bridale masse was ydon
In hall sat this January and May
As freshe as is the bright somers day
And so befyl, how that this good man
Remembreth him upon this Damian
And saide: sayre May, how may this be
That Damian entendeth not to me
Is he aye sicke: or how may this betide
His squiers, which that stoden him besyde
Excused him, because of his sickenesse
Which letted him to don his besynesse
Non other cause might make him tary
That me forthinketh (qd this January)
He is a gentil squire be my trouthe
If that he died, it were harme and routhe
He is as trusty, discrete, and secre
As any man that I wot of his degre
And therto manly and seruysable
And for to be a thrifty man right able
But after meate, as sone as euer I may
I wol my selfe visit him, and eke May
To don him al the confort that I can
And for that worde, him thanked every man
That of his bounte and of his gentylnesse
He wold so comforten in his distresse
His squier, for it was a gentil dede
Dame (qd this January) take good hede
That after meate, ye and your women all
(Whã ye haue ben in chãbre out of this hall)
That al ye gone to se thys Damyan
Bothe him disporte, he is a gentyl man
And tellen him that I wol him visite
Haue I nothyng but rested me a lyte
And spede you fast, for I wol abyde
Tyl that ye slepe fast by my syde
And with that worde he gan to him call
A squyer, that was Marchal of his hall
And tolde him certayn thynge that he wold
This fresh May hath streight her way ynom
With al her women, unto this Damyan
Downe by his beddes syde sat she than
Comforting him as goodly as she may.
This Damyan, whan that he his time sa
In secrete wise, his purse and eke his bill
(In which he had written all his will)
Hath put into her honde withouten more
Saue that he sighed wonders depe and sore
And sothly, to her right thus said he
Mercy, and that ye discouer nat me
For I am dede, if that this thing be kydde
This purse hath she in her bosome hydde
And went her way, ye gete no more of me
But unto January come is she
And on his beddes syde she sat ful softe
He taketh her, and kyssith her ful ofte
And layde him downe to slepe, and that anon
She fayned her, as that she must gon
There as ye wote, euery wight that hath nede
And whan she of this bille hath taken hede
She rent it al to cloutes, and at last
Into the privy, softely she it cast.
Who studieth now but faire freshe May
And adown by January she lay
That slept, tyl the cough hath him awaked
Anon he prayde her to strippe her all naked
He wold of her, he said, haue some pleasance
He sayd her clothes did him encombrance
And she obeyeth be she lefe or lothe
But lest that precious folke be vn me wroth
How that he wrought, I dare nat to you telle
Or whether she thought it paradise or hell
But I let him worche in his wise
Tyl fryuolous fryng, that they must arise
Were it by destenye or by auenture
Were it by influence, or by nature
Or constellacion that in suche estate
The heuen stode, that ryme fortunate
(Was for to put a bye of Venus werkes)
For al thing hath tyme, as sayn clerkes
To any woman for to gete her loue
I can not say, but the great god aboue
That knoweth, that non acte is causelesse
He deme all, for I wol holde my pees.
But sothe is this, how that this fresh May
Hath take suche impression that day
Of pyte, on this sicke Damyan
That fro her herte she bitwene can
The remembraunce for to don him ease

Cetera

certain(thouȝt she)whō this thing displease
I recke not, for this I him assure
I loue him best of any creature
Though he no more had than his shert.
Lo pite renneth soone in gentyl hert
Here may ye se, howe excellent franchise
In women is, whan they hem narowe auyse
Some tyraunt is, as there ben many one
That hath an hert as harde as any stone
Which wold haue let him sterue in ꝑ place
Wel rather thā haue graunted him her grace
And her rioyced in her cruel pride
And not haue retched to been an homycide.
This gentyl May, fulfylled of al pyte
Right so of her honde a lettre made she
In whiche she graunteth him her very grace
There lacketh nought, but onely tyme & place
Where that she might to his lust suffise
For it shal be, right as he wold deuyse
And whan she saw her tyme vpon a day
To visite this Damyan goth this faire May
And sutrely this letter down she thrust
Under his pylow, rede it if him lyst
She taketh him by the hōd, & herd him twist
So secretly, that no wight of it wist
And bad him ben all hole, & forth she went
To January, whan that he for her sent.
Up riseth Damyan the next morowe
Al passed was his sickenes and his sorowe
He kembeth him and proyneth him & pyketh
And doth al that his lady lust & lyketh
Vnto the gentyl January he gothe as lowe
And eft he hath a bogge for the bowe
He is so plesaunt to euery man
For craft is al, whō that it can
And euery wyght is fain to speken him goode
And fully in his ladyes grace he stode
Thus lete I Damyan about his nede
And in my tale, forth I wol procede.
Some clerkes holden that felycite
Consist in delyte, and therfore certayn he
This noble January with al his might
In honest wyse as longeth to a knight
Shope him to lyue ful deliciously
His housyng, his array, as honestly
To his degre, was made as a kynges
Among other of his honest thynges
He had a garden walled all with stone
So fayre a garden was there neuer none
For out of doute, I verily suppose
That he that wrote the Romaunt of the Rose
Ne counfort of it the beaute wel deuyse
Ne Priapus, ne myght not suffise
Though he be god of gardens, for to tell
The beaute of the garden, and of the well
That stont vnder a laurer alway greene
Ful ofte tyme kyng Pluto and his queene
Proserpina, and al her fayrie
Disporten hem, and maken melodye
About that well, and daunced as men telle
This noble knight, this January the olde
Such deynte hath, in it to walke and playe
That he wol suffre no wight to bere the kaye
Saue he him self, for the speal wicket
He bare alway of syluer a clicket
With which, whan that him lyst on her
And whan that he wold pay his wyfe her det
In somer season, thider wolde he go
And May his wife, & no wight but they two
And thinges which that were not don a bedde
He in ꝑ garden performed hem and spedde
And in this wyse, many a merry day
Lyued this January and this fresshe May
But worldly ioye may not alway endure
To January, ne to no lyuyng creature.
O sodayne hap, O thou fortune instable
Lyke to the Scorpion deceyuable
That flatterest with thy hed whan thou wolt stynge
Thy tayle is deth, through thine enuenymynge
O brotel ioye, O swete pestilence
O monster, that so sodainly canst pleye
Thy gyftes, vnder the hewe of stedfastnesse
That thou deceyuest both more and lesse
Why hast thou January thus deceyued
And haddest him for thy frende receyued
And now thou hast bereft him both his eyen
For losyng of which desireth he to dyen
Alas, this noble January that is so fre
Amydde his lust and his prosperite
Is wonen blynd, and al sodainly
His derke therfore desireth he verily
And therwithal, the fire of ielousy
(Lest that his wife shulde fal in some folye)
So brent his hert, that he wold fayne
That some man, both him & her had slayne
For neuer after his deth, ne in his lyfe
He wold be that she were loue ne wife
But euer lyue a wydow in clothes blake
Soole, as the turtle doth ꝑ hath lost her make
But at the last, after a moneth or tweye
His sorow gan to swage, (soth to saye
For whan he wyst it might non other be
He patiently toke his aduersyte
Saue out of doute may he not forgone
That he was ielous euer more in one
Which ielousy, it was so outrageous

That.

That neither in halle ne in none other hous
Ne in non other place neuer mo
He nolde suffre her, neither ride ne go
But if that he had honde on her alway
For which ful often wepeth fresshe May
That loueth Damyan so benignely
That she wote either dye sodaynly
Or els she wote haue him at her lest
She wayteth whan her hert shuld to brest
Upon that other syde Damyan
Become is, the sorowfullest man
That euer was, for neyther myght ne day
Ne myghte he speke a worde to fresshe May
As to his purpose of no suche matere
But if that January must it here
That had an hande vpon her euer mo
But natheles, by writyng to and fro
And preuy signes, wyst he what she ment
And she knewe all the signes of his entent.
O January, what myght the it auayle
Tho thou mightest se, as fer as shippes saile
For as good is a blynde man disceyued be
As to be disceyued, whan that a man may se.
Lo Argus, which had an hundred eyen
For al that euer he couth poze and pryen
Yet was he blent, and god wot so ben mo
That wenen wisely that it is not so
Passe ouer is an ease, I say no more.
The fresshe May, of which I spake of yore
In warme ware hath pryued this clycket
That January bare of that small wicket
By whiche vnto his garden oft he went
And Damyan that knewe her entent
The clycket counterfayted priuely
There nys no more to say, but hastely
Some wonder by this clicket shal betyde
Whiche ye shal heren, if ye wol abyde.
O noble Ouide, soth sayest thou god wote
What slight is it, though it be long and hote
That he myl fynde it out in some manere
By Pyramus and Thisbe, may men lere
Thouz they were kept ful long streit ouer all
They ben accozded, rownyng through a wal
Ther nys no wight couth finde such a sleight
But now to purpose, er the dayes eight
Were passed, er the moneth Jule befyll
That January hath caught so greate a wyll
Throgh eggyng of his wyfe, him for to play
In his garden, and no wight but they tway
That in a morow, vnto this May sayd he
Rise vp my wife, my loue, my lady fre
The turtell voice is herde my lady swete
The wynter is gon, with al his raynes wete
Come forth nowe with thyn eyen columbin
Now fayzer ben thy brestes than is wine
The garden is enclosed all about
Come forth my white spouse out of dout
Thou hast me wounded in my hert, o, wyf
No spotte in the nas in all thy lyfe
Come forth and let vs taken our disport
I chese the for my wife and my confort
Such olde leude wozdes vsed he
On Damyan a signe made she
That he shuld go before with his clicket
This Damyan hath opened this wicket
And in he stert, and that in suche manere
That no wight might it se ne here
And styl he sat vnder a bushe anon.
This January, as blynde as is a ston
With May in his hande, and no wight mo
Into his fresshe garden is he go
And clapte to the wicket sodainly.
Now wife (qd he) here nys but thou & I
That arte the creature that I best loue
For by that lorde that syt vs al aboue
I had leuer dyen on a knyfe
Than the offende, dere true wyfe
For goddes sake thynke howe I the chers
Nat for couetise, ne other good douties
But onely for the loue I had to the
And though that I be olde and may not se
Be to me true, and I wol tel you why
Certes, thre thinges shal ye wyn therby
First loue of Christe, & to your selfe honour
And al myne heritage, towne and tour
I gyue it you, maketh charters as ye lyst
This shal be don to morowe er sunne ryst
So wisely god my soule bring to blysse
I pray you on couenaunt that ye me kysse
And though that I be ielous wite nought
Ye ben so depe enprented in my thought
That whan I consider your beaute
And therwithal, the vnlikly elde of me
I may not certes, though I shuld dye
Forbere, to ben out of your company
For very loue, this is withouten dout
Now kysse me wife, and let vs rome about
This fresshe May, whã she these wozds herd
Benignely to January answerd
But first and forwarde she began to wepe
I haue (qd she) a soule for to kepe
As wel as ye, and also myn honour
And of wifehode thilke tender flour
Whiche that I haue ensured in youre honde
Whan that the preest to you my body bonde
Wherfore I wol answere in this manere

y the leaue of you my lorde so dere
I pray god that neuer dawe that day
that I ne serue, as fou'e as woman may
f euer I do to my kynne that shame
or els that I empayre so my name
that I be false, and if I do that lacke
do stripe me, and put me in a sacke
nd in the next ryuer do me drenche
I am a gentyl woman, and no wenche
thy speke ye thus, but men ben euer untrew
nd women haue reproue of you, aye new
ye can non other cõmunyng, I leue
ut speke to vs of untrust and repreue
And with ỳ word she saw where Damian
sate in the bushe, and knele he began
nd with her fyngers signes made she
that Damian shuld clymbe vpon a tre
that charged was with frute, & vp he went
for verily he knewe all her entent
nd euery signe that she couth make
better than January her owne make
for in a letter she had tolde him all
of this mater, howe that he worch shall
And thus I let him syttе in the pery
nd January and May romyng full mery.
Bright was the day, & blewe ỳ firmamẽt
Phebus of gold downe hath his stremes sente
To gladen euery flour with his warmenesse
he was that time in Gemyny, as I gesse
But lytle fro his declynacion
The causer of Ioues exaltacion
And so befyl that bright morowe tyde
That in the garden, on the farther syde
Pluto, that is the king of Fayrye
nd many a lady in his companye
Folowyng his wife, the quene Proserpyne
Ech after other right as a lyne
Whiles she gadred flours in a mede
In Claudian ye may the story rede
How in his grisely carte he her fette
This kyng of Fayry down him sette
Upon a benche of turues fresche and grene
nd right anon thus said he to his quene.
My wife, qd he that may nat say nay
The experience so proueth euery day
The treason, which that womẽ doeth to man
Ten hundred thousande tel I can
Lorable, of your untrouth and brotelnesse
O Salomon, richest of all richesse
Fulfylde of sapience, and of worldly glory
full worthy ben thy wordes in memory
To euery wight, that wit and reason can
Thus prayseth he the bounte of man

Among a thousande men yet fonde I one
But of all women fonde I neuer none
Thus saith ỳ king, ỳ knoweth your wicked
And Jesus Filius Sirach, as I gesse (nesse
Ne speketh of you but selde reuerence
A wylde fire, a corrupte pestilence
So fall vpon your bodyes yet to night
Ne se ye not this honorable knyght
Bicause alas that he is blynde and olde
His owne man shall maken him coholde
Lo where he sytte, the lechour in the tre
Now wol I graunt of my maiestе
Unto this olde blynde worthy knyght
That he shal haue agayne his eye syght
Whan that his wife wold done him vilany
Than shal he knowe al her harlotry
Both in reprefe of her and other mo.
Ye shal, qd Proserpyne and wol ye so
Now be my mothers soule sir I swere
That I shal yeuen her sufficient answere
And all women after for her sake
That though they ben in any gylte take
With face bolde, they shullé hem selue excuse
And bere hem down, that wo hem accuse
For lacke of answere, non of hem shall dyen
All had he sey a thyng with both his eyen
Yet shuld we women so visage it hardily
And wepe and swere, and chyde subtelly
That ye shal ben as lewde as gees
What recketh me of your auctorytees
I wot wel this Jewe, this Salomon
Fonde of vs women foles many one
But though he ne fonde no good woman
Yet there hath he fonde many another man
Women ful trewe, full good, & ful vertuous
Witnesse of hem that dwel in Cristes hous
With martyrdom, they preued her constaunce
The Romain testes eke make remembraunce
Of many a very true wife also
But sir, be not wroth that it be so
Though that he sayd he fond no good woman
I pray you take the sentence of the man
He ment thus, that in souerayn bounte
Is non but god, that sitteth in trone.
Eye, for very god that wys but one
What make ye so muche of Salomon
What though he made a temple goddes hous
What though he were riche and glorious
So made he a temple of false goddes
How might he don a thing ỳ more forbodde
Parde as faire as ye his name enplaster
He was a lechour, and an idolastre
And in his elde, very god forsoke

And if that god nadde (as saith the boke)
ypared him for his fathers sake, he shulde
Haue lost his reigne soner than he wolde
I set nat of all the villany
That ye of women write, a butterflye
I am a woman, nedes more I speke
Me reis swel, tyl myne herte breke
For suthen he said, that we ben jangleresses
As euer more I hope broke my tresses
I shall nat spare for no curtesy
To speke hem harme, that wolde vs villany.
Dame (qd this Pluto) be no lenger wrothe
I gyue it vp: but sythe I swore myn othe
That I wold graunte him his syght ayen
My word shal stand, I warne I you certeyn,
I am a kyng, it set me not to lye.
And I (qd she) a queue of fayrie
Her answere she shall haue I vndertake
Let vs no more wordes herof make
For soth I wol no lenger you contrary.
Now let vs turne agayne to January
That in the garden with this faire May
Syngeth merier than the Popyngay
You lowe I best, I shall, and other non
So long about the aleyes is he gon
Tyll he was comen ayenst thylke pery
Where as this Damyan sitteth ful mery
On hye, among these freshe leues grene
This freshe May, that is so bright a shene
Gan for to syke, and said: alas my syde
Now sir (qd she) for oughte that may betyde
I must haue of these peeres that I here se
Or I more dye, so sore longeth me
To eten of the smale peeres grene
Helpe for her loue that is heuen quene
I tel you wel a woman in my plyte
May haue to fruite so great an appetyte
That she may dyen, but she it haue.
Alas (qd he) that I ne had here a knaue
That couth clymbe, alas, alas (qd he)
For I am blynd. Ye sir no force (qd she)
But wolde ye vouchsafe for goddes sake
The pery in youre armes for to take
For wel I wotte that ye myssruste me
Than shuld I clymbe wel ynough (qd she)
So I my lefe myght sette vpon your backe
Forsoth said he, in me shall be no lacke
Might I you helpe with myn herte blode
He stoupeth down, and on his backe she stode
And caught her by a twyst, and vp she goth
Ladies I pray you be not wroth
I can nat glose, I am a rude man
And sodainly anon this Damyan
Gan pullen vp the smocke, and in the throng
A great tene, and thrifty and a longe
She said it was the merieste fyr
That euer in her lyfe she was at yet
My lordes sone feruethme nothing thus
It foldeth twyfolde by swete Jesus
He may nat swyue worth a leke
And yet he is ful gemyl and full meke
This is leuer to me than an euynsong
And whan that Pluto saw this wrong
To January he gaue agayn his sight
And made him se aswell as euer he myght
And when he had caught his sight agayne
Me was there neuer man of thing so faine
But on his wife his thought was euer mo
Vp to the tree he cast his eyen two
And sawe how Damian his wife had dressh
In suche manere, it may not be expressed
But if I wold speke vncurtesly
And vp he yat a roryng and a crye
As doth the mother whā the childe shal dye
Out helpe, alas, harowe (he gan to crye)
For sorow almost he gan to dye
That his wife was thwyued in the pery
O stronge lady store what dost thou
And she answered: sir what ayleth you
Haue patience and reason in your mynde
I haue you holpen of both your eyen blynde
Vp peryl of my soule, I shal nat lyen
As me was taught to helpe with your eyen
Was nothyng bette for to make you se
Than strogle with a man vpon a tree
God wot I did it in ful good entent
Strogle (qd he) ye algate in it went
Stylle and rounde as any bell
It is no wonder though thy bely swell
The smocke on his brest lay so therche
And euer me thought he poynted on ꝑ brethe
God gyue you both on shames deth to dien
He swyued the, I sawe it with myne eyen
And els I be honged by the halse
Than is (qd she) my medicyn false
For certayn, if that ye myght se
Ye wolde nat say these wordes to me
Ye haue some grymsyng, and no parfite syght
I se (qd he) as wel as euer I myght
Thanked be god, with both myne eyen two
And by my trouth me thought he dyd so
Ye mase ye mase, good sir (qd she)
This thanke haue I for that I made you se
Alas (qd she) that euer I was so kynde
Now dame (qd he) let all passe out of mynde
Come down my lefe, and if I haue myssayde

God

God helpe me so, as I am ruel apayde
But by my fathers soule, I wende haue seyn
Howe that this Damyan had by the seyn
And that thy smocke had lyen vpon his brest
Ye sir (qd she) ye may wene as ye lest
But sir, a man that waketh out of his slepe
He may not sodaynly wel taken kepe
Upon a thing, ne se it parfitely
Tyll that he be adawed verily
Right so a man that longe hath blynde be
He may not sodaynly so wel yse
First whan the sight is newe comen agayn
As he that hath a day or two ysayn
Tyll that your sight istabled be a while
There may full many a syght you begyle
Beware I pray you, for by heuen kyng
Ful many a man weneth to se a thyng
And it is al another than it semeth
He that my sconcery eth ofte mysdemeth
And with that worde she lept doun fro ỹ tre
This January, who is gladde but hee
He kysseth her, he clyppeth her full ofte
And on her wombe he stroketh her ful softe
And to his paleys home he hath her lad
Nowe good men I pray you, beth ye al glad
Thus endeth here my tale of January
God blesse vs al, and his mother Mary.

Thus endeth the Marchaunt es tale and here foloweth the wyfe of Bathes prologue.

Experyence, thoughe none authorite
Were in this worlde, is ryght ynow for me
To speke of wo that is in marryage
For lordiges, syth I twelue yere was of age
Thanked be god, that is eterne on lyue
Husbondes at chirche dore haue I had fyue
If I so ofte myght haue wedded be
And all were worthy men in her degre.
But me was tolde not long ago tyys
That sythen Christ went neuer but onys
To weddyng, in the cane of Galilee
That by thilke ensample taught he me
That I ne chuld wedded be, but ones.
Lo here, whiche a sharpe word for ỹ nones
Besyde a well, Jesu god and man
Spake in reprefe of the Samaritan
Thou hast had fyue husbandes (qd he)
And that ilke man that nowe hath thee
Is not thyn husbonde: thus sayd he certayn
What he ment therby I can not sayn
But that I aske a poynte, why the fyfte man
Was nat husbonde to the Samaritan
Howe many might she haue in marriage?
yet herde I neuer tellen in myne age
Upon this numbre trewe diffinicion
Men may deuine, and glosen vp and doun
But well I wotte expresse without ye
God badde vs for to wexe and multiplye
That gentil text can I well understonde
Eke wel I wote he sayd myn husbonde
Shoulde leaue father & mother, & take to me
But of numbre no mencyon made he
Of bigamye or of octogamye
Why shoulde men speke of it villanye
Lo he the wyse kyng Salamon
I trowe had wyues mo than on
As woulde god it lefull were to me
To be refreshed halfe so ofte as he
Which a gifte of god had he, for his wyues
No man hath suche, ỹ in this world alyue is
God wote this noble king, as to my wytte
The first nyght had many a mery fytte
With eche of hem, so wel was him on lode
Blessed be god, I haue had fyue
Welcome the fyfte whenes euer he shall
For sothe I wyll not kepe me chaste in all
When myn husbonde is fro the world ygon
Some christen man shal wedde me anon
For than the apostel sayth, that I am free
To wedde a godschalfe, where it liketh me
He sayth, that to be wedded is no synne
Better is to be wedded than to brynne
What recketh me though folke say vil any
Of shrewde Lameth, and of his bigamy
I wote wel Abraham was an holy man
And Jacob eke, as fer as euer I here can
And eche of hem had wyues mo than two
And many another holy man also
Where can you say in any maner age
That euer god defended marryage
By expresse wordes? I praye you tell me
Or where commaunded he virginite

I wote as well as ye, it is no drede
The Apostel, when he spake of maydenhede
He sayd, therof precept had he none
Men may counsayle a woman to be one
But counsayling is no commaundement
He put it in our owne iudgement
For had god comaunded maydenhede
Then had he dampned wedding out of drede
And certes, if there were no sede yfowe

Virginite than wherof shoulde it growe
Nouie durst not commaund at the leste
Ithing, of whiche his master yafe none heste
The darte is set vp for virginite
Catche who so may, who renneth best let se.
But this worde is not taken of euery wight
But there as god lyst yeue it of his might
I wotte well that the apostel was a mayde
But netheles, though that he wrote & saide
Ye wolde that euery wight were such as he
Alnys but counsayle to virginite
And for to ben a wyfe, he yaue me leue
Of indulgence, so it be not to repreue
To wedde me, if that my make dye
Without exception of bygamye
Al were it good no woman for to touche
He ment as in his bedde or in his couche
For peril is, both fire and towe to assemble
Ye know what this ensample may resemble
This is al and some, he held virginite
More parfyte than wedding in freelte.
¶ Freelte clepe I, but if that he and she
Wolde lede her life all in chastite
I graunt it well, I haue none enuye
Though maydenhede preferre bygamye
It liketh hem to be clene in body and goste
Of myne estate I wol make no boste
For well ye knowe, a lord in his houshoulde
Hath nat euery vessell all of golde
Some ben of tre, and don her lorde seruice
God clepeth folke to hym in sondry wise
And euerych hath of god a proper gyfte
Some this, some that, as him liketh shifte
Virginite is great perfection
And continence eke with deuocion
But Christe, that of perfection is well
Badde not euery wyght he shoulde go sell
All that he had, and giue it to the poore
And in suche wyse folowe hym and hys lore
He spake to hem, that woulde liue parfitly
And lordinges (by your leaue) that am nat I
I wol bestowe the floure of al myn age
In the actes and fruite of mariage
Tell me also, to what conclucion
Were membres made of generacion
And of so parfite wise a wight iwrought
Trusteth wel, they were nat made for nought
Glose who so wol, and saye vp and doun
That they were made for purgacion
Of brine, and other thinges smale
And eke to knowe a femele from a male
And for non other cause, what say ye no
The experience worte wel it is not so
So that the clerkes be not with me wrothe
I say that they were maked for bothe
This is to sayn, for office and for ease
Of engendrure, there we not god displease
Why shoulde men elis in her bokes sette
That man shulde yelde to his wife her dette
Now wherwith shuld he pay his payment
If he ne vsed his fely instrument
Than were they made vpon a creature
To purge bryne, and eke for engendrure
But I say not that euery wyght is holde
That hath suche harneste, as I to you tolde
To gon and vsen hem to engendrure
Than shoulde men take of chastyte no cure
Christ was a mayde, and shapen as a man
And many a sainte, sithen the worlde began
Yet liued they euer in parfite chastyte
I nyll enuye no virginyte
Let hem with bredde of pure whete be fedde
And let vs wyues eate barly bredde
And yet with barly bred, Marke tell can
Our lorde Jesu refreshed many a man
In suche a state as god hath cleped vs
I wol persewer, I nam not precious
~~In wifehode wol I vse myn instrument~~
~~As freely as my maker hath it sent~~
~~If I be daungerous, god gyue me sorow~~
~~Myn husbond shal it haue both eue and morow~~
~~When that him lyst come forth & pay his det~~
~~An husbonde wol I haue I wol not let~~
Which shalbe both my dettour & my thral
And haue his tribulacion with all
Upon hys flesche, while that I am his wyfe
I haue the power during al my lyfe
Upon his proper body, and nat he
Right thus the apostle tolde to me
And bad our husbondes for to loue vs well
Al this sentence me lyketh euery dell.
¶ Up stert the pardoner, and that anon
Now dame quod he, by god & by seint John
Ye ben a noble prechour in thys caas
I was about to wedde a wyfe, alas
What, shoulde I bye it on my flesche so dere
Yet had I leuer wedde no wife to pere
Abyde qd she, my tale is not begon
Nay, thou shalte drinke of another ton
Er that I go, shal sauer worse then ale
And when that I haue told forth my tale
Of tribulacion that is in mariage
Of whiche I am expert in al myn age
This is to say, myn selfe hath ben the whippe
Than maist thou chese whether thou wolt slippe
Of thilke toune, that I shal sette abroche

Beware

ewarē of it, er thou to nere aproche
for I shall tell ensamples mo than ten
Who so wol not bewarē by other men
By him shal other men corrected be
These same wordes writeth Petholome
Rede in his almagest, and take it there.
Dame I wol pray you, if your wil were
Said this Pardoner, as ye began
Tel forth your tale, spareth for no man
And teche vs yong men of your practike
Gladly (qd she) if it may you lyke
But that I pray to all this company
If that I spelke after my fantasy
As taketh not a grefe of that I say
For myne entent is not but to play
Now sirs, than shal I tel forth my tale
As euer mote I drinke wyne or ale
I shal say soth. Tho husbondes that I had
Thre of hem were good, and two were bad
The thre good men were riche and olde
Vnethes myght they the statute holde
In which they were bounden vnto me
Ye wot well what I meane of this parde
As ~~god me helpe, I laugh when I thynke~~
~~How pertly a myght I made hem to swinke~~
But by my fay, I tolde of it no more
They had me yeue her londe and her tresore
Me ne ded no neder to do dilygence
To wynne her loue, and do hem reuerence
They loued me so wel by god aboue
That I ne tolde no deyntē of her loue
A wyse woman wol besy her euer in one
To get her loue, there as she hath none
But tho I had hem holy in myn honde
And that they had geue me all her londe
What shuld I take kepe hem for to plese
But if it were for my profite and myn ese
I set hem so a worke by my faye
That many a myght they songen wel awaye
The bacon was not fet for hem I trowe
That some mē haue in Essex at Dōmowe
I gouerned hem so wel after my lawe
That eche of hem full blysfull was and fawe
To bringe me gay thinges fro the fayre
They were ful fain whan I spake hem faire
For god it wot, I chidde hem spitously
Now herkeneth how I bere me properly.
Ye wyse wyues that can vnderstonde
Thus shul ye speke, and bere hem on honde
For halfe so boldly there can no man
Swere and lye, as a woman can
I say not this by wyues that ben wise
But if it be, whan they hem selfe mysuise

A wyse wife shall, if that she can her good
Bere hem in honde the cowe is wood
And take witnesse of her owne mayde
Of her assent: but herkeneth how I sayde.
Sir olde kenarde, is this thyn aray
Why is myne neighbours wife so gay
She is honoured ouer all where she go the
I sitte at home, and haue no thrifty clothe
What dost thou at myn neighbours house
Is she so fayre, art thou so amorous
What rouncst thou with our mayde benedicite
Sir olde lechour, let thy tapes be
And yf I haue a gossip or a frende
(without gylte) thou chidest as a fende
If that I walke or play vnto his house
Thou comest home as dronken as a mouse
And prechest on thy benche with yuel prefe
Thou sayst to me, it is a great mischefe
To wedde a poore woman for costage
And if that she be riche of high parage
Than sayst thou, it is a vexy tormentry
To suffer her pride and her melancoly
And if that she be fayre, thou verey knaue
Thou sayst that euery holour wol her haue
She may no while in chastite abyde
That is assayled on euery syde
Thou sayst some folke desiren vs for richesse
Some for our shape, and some for our fairnesse
And some, for she can eyther sing or daunce
And some for gentylnesse or for daliaunce
Some for her hondes and her armes smale
Thus goth all to the deuyl by thy tale.
Thou sayst men may not kepe a castel wall
It may so longe assayled be ouer all
And yf that she be foule, thou sayst that she
Coueth euery man that she may se
For as a spanyell, she wol on hem lepe
Tyl that she fynde some man yt wol her chepe
Ne non so gray gose goth there in the lake
(As sayst thou) wol ben without her make
And sayst, it is a harde thing for to welde
A wight, that no man wol his thonke helde
Thus sayst thou lorel, whan I go ne bedde
That no wise man nedeth for to wedde
Ne no man that entendeth vnto heuyn
With wilde thunder dint and fire ieuyn
Pray that thy wicked necke be to broke.
Thou sayst, droppyng houses, and eke smoke
And chidyng wyues, maken men to flee
Out of her owne house, ah, benedicite
What ayleth suche an olde man for to chyde
Thou sayst, we wyues wol our vices hide
Tyll we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe

Thou

Well may this be a prouerbe of a shrewe
Thou sayst, ꝑ oxen, horse, asses, & hounds
They ben assayd at diuers stondes
Basins, lauers, er that men hem bye
Spones, stoles, and all suche husbondrye
And so be pottes, clothes, and arayes
But folke of wyues maken non assayes
Tyll they ben wedded, olde dotarde shrewe
And sayst, how we wol than our vices shewe
Thou sayest also, that it displeaseth me
But if that thou wylt prayse my beaute
And but thou poke alway on my face
And clepe me fayre dame in euery place
And but thou make a feeste on that ilke day
That I was borne, & make me freshe & gay
And but thou done to my norryce honour
And to my chamber wyth in my bour
And to my fathers folke, and hys alyes
Thus sayest thou olde barell full of lyes.
And yet of our prentise Jenkyn
For hys crispe heer, shynyng as golde fine
And for he squyreth me bothe vp and down
Hast thou caught a false suspection
I wol hym nat, tho thou were ded to morow.
But tell me thys, why hidest thou wᵗh sorow
The keyes of thy chest away fro me?
It is my good as wel as thyn parde
What, wenest ꝑ make an ydiot of our dame
Nowe by that lord that called is saynt Jame
Thou shalt nat both though thou wer wood
Be master of my body & of my good
That one ꝑ shalt forgon maugre thyn eyen
What helpeth it of me to enquere and spien?
I trowe thou woldest locke me in thy chyst?
Thou shouldest say: wife, go where you lyst
Take your disporte, I wol leue no tales
I knowe you for a trewe wife dame Ales
We loue no man, that taketh kepe or charge
Where that we go, we wol be at our large.
Of all men yblessed mote he be
The wyse astrologien dan Ptholome
That sayeth this prouerbe in his almagest
Of all men his wisdome is the best
That recketh not who hath the world in hõde
By thys prouerbe thou shalt vnderstande
Haue thou ynowe, what dare ꝑ recke or care
Nowe mercy that other folke fare
For certes, olde dotarde by your leue
Ye shall haue queynt ynowe at eue
He is to great a nygarde that wolle werne
A man, to lyght a candle at hys lanterne
He shal haue neuer the lesse lyght parde
Haue thou ynowe, thou darst not playn the:
Thou saiest also, that if we make vs gay
With clothes, or with precious array
That it is peryl of our chastite
And yet with sorow, thou must enforsen vs
And say these wordes in the Apostles name
In habite made with chastite and shame
Ye women shuld appareyle you (qd he)
And nat in tressed heer, and gay perre
As perles, ne with golde, ne clothes riche
After the text, ne after thy rubriche
I nyll not wrighte as moche as a gnatte.
Thou sayest also, I was lyke a catte
But who so wolde senge the cattes skynne
Than wolde the catte dwellen in his inne
And if the cattes skyn be slicke and gay
She nyll nat dwel in house halfe a day
But forth she wol or any day be dawed
To shewe her skyn, and gon a catrewawed.
Thus thou sayest, if I be gay sir shrewe
I wol renne out, my borell for to shewe
Sir olde fole, what helpeth the to spyen
For though thou play Argus wᵗh his. C. eyen
To be my wardecors, as he can best
In faith he shal not kepe me but me lest
Yet couth I make his berde, so mote I the
Thou sayest eke, ꝑ there ben thinges three
The which troublen all this erthe
And that no wight may endure the ferth
O, lefe sir shrewe, Jesu shorte thy lyfe
Yet prechest thou, & saiest: an hateful wife
I reckened is for one of these my schaunces
Ben there non other resemblaunces?
That ye may lyken your paraboles to
But if a scly wife be one of tho.
Thou lyknest eke, womens loue to hell
To barayn londe, there water may not dwell
Thou lyknest it also to wylde fyre
The more it brenneth, the more it hath desire
To consume any thyng that brent wolde be.
Thou saist, right as wormes shẽden a tree
Right so a wife destroyeth her husbonde
This knowen they that ben to wiues bonde.
Lordinges, right thus as ye haue vnderstonde
Bare I stiffely myn olde husbande on honde
That thus they sayden in her dronkenesse
And all was false, but as I toke witnesse
Of Jenkyn, and of my nece also
O lorde the payne I dyd hem, and the wo
Full giltles by goddes swete pyne
For as an horse, I couthe bothe bite & whyne
I couth playn, though I were in the gilte
Or elis often tyme I had ben spylte
Who so first to myl cometh, first grynt

I playne

I playned first, and so was our ware isyut
They were full glad to excusen hem blyue
Of thynge, that they a gylte neuer in her liue
Of wenches wolde I bere hem on honde
Whan ỳ for sick, vnnethes might they stonde
Yet tickled I his herte, for that he
Wende I had of hym so great cheerte
I swore, that all my walkyng out by nyght
Was for to espye wenches, that he dyght
Vnder that colour had I muche myrthe
For all such witte, is gyuen vs in our byrthe
Deceite, weepyng, spynning, god hath gyue
To women, kyndly whyle that they lyue
And thus of o thing I may auaunt me
Atwende I had the best in eche degre
By sleight or force, or by some maner thing
As by contynuall murmure or grutchyng
Namely a bedde had they mischaunce
There woulde I chide, and don no pleasaunce
I wolde no lenger in the bedde abyde
Yf I felt his arme ouer my syde)
Vntil he had made hys raunsom vnto me
Than woulde I suffer hym to do hys nycete
And therfore, euery man thys tale I tell
Wynne who so may, all ben for to sell
Vnthrifty bondes men may no haukes lure
For wynning wolde I all hys lust endure
And make me than a fayned appetite.
~~And yet in bacon had I neuer delite~~
That maked me euer ỳ I woulde hem chide
For thoughe the pope had sitten hem beside
I wolde not spare hem at her owne borde
For be my truth I quit hem word for worde
So helpe me very god omnipotent
Tho I right now shulde make my testament
I owe hem a wrde, but it is quitte
I wrought it so about by my witte
That they must giue it vp, as for the best
Or elis had we neuer ben in rest
For though he loked as wode as a lyon
I should he fayle of hys conclusion.
Than woulde I saye, good lefe take kepe
How mekely loketh wyllken our shepe
Come nere my spouse, and let me kysse your cheke
Ye shoulde be all patient and meke
And haue a swete spiced conscience
Sythe ye so preche of Jobs patience
Suffreth alway, sith ye so wel can preche
And but if ye do, we shall you teche
That it is so faire to haue a wyfe in pees
One of vs two mote obeyen doutles
And sithe a man is more reasonable
Than a woman is, ye must ben sufferable
What ayleth you to grutche thus and grone
Is it for ye woulde haue me queynt alone?
~~Why take it al~~. Io, haue it euery dell
Peter I shrewe you, but ye lone it well.
For if I woulde sel my bellchose
I couth walke as freshe as any rose
But I woll kepe it for your owne toth
Ye be to blame by god, I say you soth
Suche maner wordes had we on honde
Now will I speke of my fourth husbonde.
¶ My fourth husbonde was a reuelour
This is to say, he had a paramour
And I was yonge and ful of ragery
Stubburne and strong, and ioly as a pye
Well coude I daunce, to an harpe smale
And sing ywis as a nyghtingale
When I had dronken a draught of swete wine
Metellius, the foule churle the swine
That with a staffe brayde his wife her life
For she dronk wine: though I had be his wife
He shulde he not haue daunted me fro drinke
And after wyne of Venus must I thinke
For also seker, as colde engendreth hayle
A lycorys mouth must haue a lecherous taile
In women vinolent is no defence
This know lecherous by experyence.
But lorde Christ, when it remembreth me
Vpon my youth, and my iolyte
It tyckleth me about the hert rote
Vnto thys day it dothe my hert bote
That I haue had my worlde, as in my tyme
But age alas, that all wol envenyme
Hath me byraft my beaute, and my pith
Lette go farewell, the deuil go therwith
The flour is gon, ther is no more to tel
The bran as I best can now mote I sel
But yet to be right mery wol I fonde
Now forth to tell of my fourth husbonde,
¶ I say I had in hert great dispite
That he of any other had delite
But he was quit, by god and saynt Ioce
I made hym of the same wode a croce
Not of my body in no foule manere
But certaynly, I made folke such chere
That in hys owne grece I made hym fry
For anger, and for very ielousy
By god, in erthe I was his purgatory
For whiche I hope hys soule be in glory
For god it wote, he sate ful oft and songe
When that his shoe ful bitterly hym wronge
There was non, saue god and he, that wist
In many wise, how sore that I hym twist
He deyed when I came fro Ierusalem

And

And lieth in graue vnder the Rode beem
Al wys his toumbe so curious
As was the sepulture of hym Darius
Apiche that Appelles wrought so subtelly
It is but wast to bury hym preciously
Let him fare well, god giue his soule good reste
He is nowe in hys graue and in his cheste.
¶ Nowe of my fyfth husbonde will I tell
God lette neuer his soule come in hell
And yet was he to me the moste shrewe
That fele I on my ribbes al by rewe
And euer shal, vnto myn ending day
But mouy beddle he was so fresshe and gay
And therwithall he couth so well me glose
Whan that he wouldle haue my bele chose
That though he had me bete on euery bone
He couthe winne ayen my loue anone
I trowe I loued hym the better, for that he
Was of his loue so daungerous to me
We wemen haue, if that I shal not lye
In this matere, a queynte fantasy
Wayte what thinge we may not lightly haue
Therafter wol we crye al day and crane
Forbyd vs thing, and that desyren we
Prese on fast, and than wol we flee
With daunger hertes we all our chaffare
Great prys at market maketh dereworth ware
And to great cheepe is holde at no lasti pryce
This knoweth euery woman that is wyse.
¶ My fifth husbonde, god his soule blesse
Whiche I toke for loue and no ryches
Some tyme was a clerke in Oxenforde
And had left scole, & went at home to borde
With my gossip, dwelling in our toun
God haue her soule, her name was Alisoun
She knew me myn herte, and eke my priuete
Better than our parisshe prest so mote I the
To her bewrayed I my counsail all
For had my husbonde pist on a wall
Or done a thing, that sholde haue cost his lyfe
To her, and to another worthy wyfe
And to my nece, whiche that I loued well
I would haue told his counsaile euery dell
And so I dyd ful often gode it were
That made hys face ful oft red and bere
For very shame, and blamed hym self, for he
Had told to me so great a priuite.
¶ And so befyll, that ones in a lent
So ofte tyme I to my gossyp went
For euer yet I loued to go gay
And for to walke in March, Aprel, and May
Fro house to house, to harken sondry tales
That Jenkyn clerke, & my gossyp dame Ales
And I my self, into the feldes went
My husbonde was at London all that lent
I had the better layser for to play
And for to se, and eke for to be sey
Of lusty folke, what wyst I where my grace
Was shapen for to be, or in what place
Therfore made I my visitacions
To vigilies, and to processions
To prechyng eke, and to pilgrymages
To playes of myracles, and to mariages
And wered on my gay scarlet gytes
Thefe wormes, ne thefe moughtes, ne no wyghtes
Upon my peryll frette hem neuer a dell
And wost thou why? for they were vsed wel.
Nowe wol I tel forth what happed me
I say, that in the feldes walked we
Fyl trewly we had suche daliaunce
This clerke and I, that of my purueyaunce
I spake to hym, and sayd, howe that he
If I were widowe, shoulde wedde me
For certainly, I say for no bosaunce
Yet was I neuer without purueyaunce
Of marriage, ne of other thinges eke
I holde a mouses herte not worthe a leke
That hath but one hole to sterten to
And if that faile, than is all vdo.
I bade him eke he shoulde him bethenke
Of wyues that he coude, that were deynte
Lyke as he coude, and I wold him teche
Also I sayd, I wedde a myllere
For twelfe I dare swere, as I am here
And all my dedes was full of lecherye
And yet I hope ynough therby shal be me good
For bleke herteworth gold, as I was taught
And al was fals, I dremed of him right naught
But as I folowed euer my dames lore
As wel of that, as of other thinges more.
But now sir lest me forget, what shall I saye
I say, by god I haue my tale agayne
After that my fourth husbonde was on bere
I wept algate, and made forte chere
As wyues mosten, for it is vsage
And with my kercheef couered my vysage
But for that I was purueyed of a make
I wept but smal, and that I vnderstake
To church was my husbonde borne on morwe
With neighbours, that for him made sorowe
And Jenkyn our clerke was one of tho
As helpe me god, whan that I sawe him go
After the bere, me thought he had a paire
Of legges and of fete, so clene and so faire
That all my herte I yaue vnto his holde
He was I trowe, twenty wynter olde
And I was fourty, yf that I shall say sothe

Yet I had alway a coltes tothe
Stedfastnesse I was, & that byfore me wele
I had the prime of dame Venus scole
Be wise me god, I was a lusty one
In faire, riche, & yong, and well bygone
And truely, as myne husbondes tolde me
I had the best quoyntte that myght be
For certes I am all full of Venerian
In feling, and my herte is Martian
Venus me yaue my lust & my lycorousnesse
And Mars yaue me my sturdy hardynesse
Myne ascendent was Taure, & Mars therin.
Alas alas, that euer loue was sin
I folowed ay myne inclinacion
By vertue of my constellacion
That made me I could not withdrawe
The chambre of Venus from a good felawe
Yet had I Mars marke vpon my face
And also in a nother preuy place
For god so wysly be my saluacion
I neuer loued by no discrecion
But euer folowed myne appetyte
Al were he short, long, blacke, or whyte
Or rede he kepte, so that he lyked me
How poore he was, ne eke of what degre.
What shold I saye but at the monethes ende
This ioly clerke Jenkin, that was so hende
Hath wedded me with great solempnite
And eke I yaue to him vnto his londe and fe
That euer was yeuen me here byfore
But afterwarde repented me ful sore
He nolde suffre nothyng of my lust
By god he smote me ones with his fist
That I lerne out of his boke a lefe
That of that stroke my eare was deffe
For wrothe I was, as is a lyonesse
And of my tonge a verray langleresse
And walke I wold, as I had done byfome
From house to house, although he had it fworne
For which ful ofte tyme wolde he preche
And me of old Romayn gestes teche
How he Sulpicius Gallus lefte his wyfe
And her forsoke tremne of his lyfe
Not but for open herd he her fyr
Seyng out at his dore on a dey.
Another Romayn tolde he me by name
That for his wyfe was at a somer game
Without his weryng, he forsoke her eke
And than wold he vpon his vyole seke
That vile prouerbe of Ecclesiaste
Where he commaundeth, & forbyddeth faste
Man shal not suffre his wife go royle about
Than wolde he say right thus out of dout
Who so buyldeth his house all of salowes
And pricketh his blind horse ouer the falowes
And suffreth his wyfe for to seche hallowes
He is worthye to be hanged on the gallowes
But al for nought, I set not an hawe
Of his prouerbes, ne of his olde sawe
Ne I wold not of him corrected be
I hate him that my vices telleth me
And so do mo god wot than I
This made him wood with me al yeer ly
I nolde not forbere him in no cas
Now wol I say you forth by S. Thomas
Why that I rent out of his boke a lefe
For which he smote me, that I was deffe
He had a boke, that gladly nyght and day
For his disporte he wolde rede alway
He cleped it Valery, and Theophrast
At which boke he lough alway full fast
And eke there was a clerke somtime at Rome
A cardynall, that highte sainct Jerome
That made a boke ayenst Jouinian
In which boke there was eke Tertulyan
Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowys
That was abbesse nat ferre fro Parys
And eke the parables of Salomon
Ouides art, and bokes many one
And all these were bounden in on volume
And euery nyght and day was his custume
When he had leyser and vacacioun
From other worldly occupacioun
To reden in this boke of wicked wyues
He knewe of hem mo legendes and lyues
Than ben of good women al the Byble
For trusteth wel, it is an impossible
That any clerke wold speke good of wyues
But if it ben of holy faynctes lyues
Ne of no other woman neuer the mo
Who peynted the lyon, tel me who
By god if wemen had written stories
As clerkes han, within her oratories
They wold haue wrought of men more wickednesse
Than all the marke of Adam may redresse
The children of Mercury and Venus
Ben in her worchyng full contrarious
Mercury loueth wysedom and science
And Venus loueth riot and dispence
And for her diuers disposicion
Ech falleth in others exaltacion
And thus god wot Mercury is desolate
In pisces, where Venus is exaltate
And Venus falleth wher Mercury is reised
Therfore no woman of no clerke is preysed
The clerke whan he is old, & may nought do

Of

Of Ouides werkes, not worthe his olde shoe
Than syrre he down, and writ in his dotage
That women can nat kepe her mariage
But now to purpose, why I tolde the
That I was beten for a boke parde
Upon a nyght Jenken, that was our sire
Redde vpon his boke, as he sate by the fyre
Of Eue first, that for her wickednesse
Was al mankynd brought to wretchednesse
For which ỳ Jesu Christ him selfe was slayn
That bought vs with his herte blode agayn
Lo here expresse of women may ye fynde
That woman was the losse of all mankynde
Tho rad he me how Sãpson lost his heeres
Slepyng, his leman cut hem with her sheres
Thorow which treason lost he both his eyen
Tho rad he me, if that I shall not lyen
Of Hercules, and of his Dianyre
That caused him to set him selfe a fire
Nothyng forgat he the care and the wo
That Socrates had with his wiues two
Howe that Xantippe cast pysse on his heed
This sely man sat styl, as he were deed
He wyped his hed, no more durst he sain
But er the thonder stynte there cometh rayn
Of Pasiphae, that was quene of Crete
For shrewdnesse him thought that tale swete
Fye, spake no more, it is a grisely thyng
Of her horrible lust and her lykyng
Of Clytemnestra for her lechery
That falsely made her husbande for to dye
He rad it with wel good deuocion
He tolde me eke, for what occasyon
Amphiaraus at Thebes lost his lyfe
My husbonde had a legende of his wyfe
Eriphilem that for an ouche of golde
Hath previly vnto the grekes tolde
Where that her husbonde hyd him in a place
For whiche he had at Thebes sory grace
Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucy
They both made her husbondes for to dye
That one for loue, that other was for hate
Lyma her husbonde on an euyn late
Enpoysoned had, for that she was his foe
Lucia lykerous loued her husbonde so
That for he shuld al way vpon her thynke
She gaue him suche a loue maner drinke
That he was deed, er it were morowe
And thus algates husbondes han sorowe
Than tolde he me, howe one Latumeus
Complayned to his felowe Arius
That in his garden growed suche a tree
On which (he said) that his wyues three
Honged hem selfe for hertes despitous
O lefe brother (qd this Arius)
Yeue me a plant of this blyssful tree
And in my garden planted shall it be.
Of later date of wyues hathe he redde
That some han slayn her husbodes in bedde
And let her lechour dight hem all the nyght
Whiles that the coys lay in sloze vpright
And some had dryue nayles in her brayn
Whiles they slepe, and thus they haue hem slayn
Some haue yeue hem poyson in her drinke
He spake more harme than herte may thynke
And therwithal he knewe mo prouerbes
Than in this world there groweth grasse
Bet is (qd he) thine habitacion (herde
Be with a lyon, or a foule dragon
Than with a woman vsyng for to chyde
Bet is (qd he) hyghe in the rofe to abyde
Than with an angrye wife down in an hous
They ben so wicked and so contrarious
They hate, that they husbondes louen
Ye sayd, a woman cast her shame awaye
When she cast of her smocke: and farther more
A faire woman, but she be chaste also
Is lyke a golde ryng on a sowes nose
Who coude wene, or who coud suppose
The wo, that in myne herte was and pyne
And when I sawe he wolde neuer fyne
To reden on this cursed boke al nyght
All sodaynly three leues haue I plyght
Out of his boke, right as he radde, and eke
I with my fyst so toke him on the cheke
That in the fire he fel backwarde adoun
And vp he sterte, as doth a wode lyoun
And with his fyst he smote me on myne heed
That in the sloze I lay as I were deed
And when he sey how styll that I lay
He was agast, and wold haue fled away
Tyl at the last out of my swoun I braide
Oh, hast thou slayn me false thefe I sayde
For my londe thus hast thou murdred me
Er I be deed, yet wol I ones kysse the
And nere he came, and kneled faire adoun
And said: dere suster, sweete Alysoun
As helpe me god I shall the neuer smyte
That I haue don it is thy selfe to wyte
Forgeue it me, and that I the beseke
And yet eft sones I hytte him on the cheke
And said: thefe, thus moche am I bewreke
Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke.
But at the last, with mokel care and wo
We fel accorded within our seluen two
He yaf me all the bridell in myne honde

To haue the gouernaunce of house & londe
And of his tonge, and of his honde also
And made him brenne his boke anon tho
And when I had gotten vnto me
By maistrie, all the souerayntè
Than he said: myne owne trew wyfe
Doth as thou lyst, the terme of all thy lyfe
Kepe thyne honour, and eke myne estate
After that day we had neuer debate
God helpe me so, I was to him as kynde
As any wyfe fro Denmarke vnto Inde
And also trewe, and so was he to me
I pray to god, that sitte in maieste
So blysse his soule, for his mercy dere
Now wol I say my tale if ye wol here.
¶ The frere lough whan he had herd al this
Now dame (qd he) so haue I ioy or blys
This is a long preamble of a tale
And whan the Sompner herd ꝑ frere gale
Lo (qd this sompner) by goddes armes two
I frere wol entermete him euermo
Lo good men, a fye and eke a frere
Wol fal in euery dyche and eke matere
What spekest thou of preambulacion?
What amble or trot, ether peace or sit a doun
Thou letterst our disporte in this matere.
Ye wolt ꝑ so sir sompner (qd the frere)
Now by my fay I shal, er that I go
Tell of a Sompner, suche a tale or two
That al the folke shal laugh in this place.
Now sire frere I beshrewe thy face
(Quod this sompner) & I beshrewe me
But if I tell tales two or three
Of freres, er I come to Sittyngburne
That shal make thyne hert for to murne
For wel I wot thy pacyence is goon.
¶ Our host cried peace, and that anoon
And said: let the woman tel her tale
Ye fare as folke, that dronken ben of ale
Do dame, tel forth your tale, & that is best
Il redy sir (quod she) right as you lest
If I haue lycence of this worthy frere
Yes dame, tel forth your tale, I wol it here.

Here endeth the wyfe of Bathes prologue, and here begynneth her tale.

A ꝑ olde daies of king Arthure
(Of which ꝑ Bretõs spe ken great honour)
All was this lond fulfilled of fayry
The Elfe quene, wyth her ioly company
Daunced ful oft in many a grene mede
This was the olde opinion as I rede
I speke of many an hundred yere a go
But nowe can no man se none elfes mo
For now the great charite and prayers
Of lymytours and other holy freres
That serchen euery lande and euery streme
As thicke as motes in the sonne beme
Blissing halles, chambres, kitchens, & boures
Cytes, borowes, castelles, and hye toures
Thropes, bernes, shepens, and dayries
This maketh, that there ben no fayries
For there as wonte to walke was an elfe
There walketh now the lymitour hym selfe
In vndermeles, and in morwynges
And saith his matyns, & his holy thynges
As he goth in his lymitacion
Women may go safely vp and doun
In euery bushe, and vnder euery tre
There nys none other incubus but he
And he ne wil done hem no dishonour.
¶ And so fell it, that this kyng Arthour
Had in his house a lusty bacheler
That on a day come ridyng fro the ryuer
And happed, that alone as he was borne
He saw a mayde walkyng him byforne
Of which maide anon, maugre her hede
(By very force) he bereft her maydenhede
For which oppression was suche clamour
And suche pursute vnto kynge Arthour
That dampned was this knight to be deed
By course of lawe, & shuld haue lost his heed
Peraduenture suche was the statute tho
But that the quene, and other ladyes mo
So long prayden the kyng of grace
Tyl he his lyfe graunted in that place
And yaue him to the quene, al at her wyll
To chese whether ꝑ she wold him saue or spill
The quene thãketh ꝑ kyng wt all her myght
And after this, thus spake she to the knight
Whan she sey her time on a day.
¶ Thou standest yet (qd she) in suche aray
That of thy lyfe yet hast thou no suerte
I graunt the thy lyfe, if that thou cãst tel me
What thyng is it, that women most desyren

Beware, and kepe thy necke bone from yren
And if thou canst not tell it me anon
Yet wol I yeue the lene for to gon
A twelue moneth and a day, to seke and lere
An answere sufficient in this matere
And surtie wol I haue, er that thou passe
Thy body for to yelde in this place.
¶ Wo was ỹ knight, & sorowfully he sighed
But what he may not don al as him lyketh
And at last he chese him for to wende
And comen ayen, right at the yeres ende
With such answer, as god wold him purvay
And taketh his leue, & wendeth forth his way
He seketh euery house and euery place
Where as he hopeth for to fynde grace
To lerne, what thing women louen most
But he ne couth arryuen in no coost
Where as he might fynde in this matere
Two creatures accordyng yfere
Some said, women loued best richesse
Some said honour, some said iolynesse
Some said rude aray, some said lust a bed
And ofte tyme to be widowe and wed
Some said, that our herte is most ỹ esed
Whan that we been flatered and ỹ plesed
He goeth ful nye the sothe, I wol not lye
A man shal wynne vs best with flatrye
And with attendaunce, and with busynesse
Been we tyched both more and lesse.
And some men sayn, how ỹ we louen best
For to been free, and do right as vs lest
And that no man repreue vs of our vice
But say that we be wise, & nothing nice
For truely there nys none of vs all
If any wight wol clawe vs on the gall
That we nyl kyke, for that he sayth his sothe
Assaye, and he shall fynde it, that so dothe
For be we neuer so vicious within
We wol be holden wise and clene of syn.
And some men sain, ỹ gret delyte haue we
For to been holde stable and estre
And in o purpose stedfastly to dwell
And nat bewray thing that men vs tell
But that tale is not worth a rake stele
Pardie we women can nothyng hele
Witnesse of Mydas, wol ye here the tale
¶ Ouide, among other thinges smale
Said, Midas had under his long heres
Growing on his heed, two asses eres
The which he hidde, as he best myght
Full subtelly from euery mannes syght
That saue his wife, there wiste of it no mo
He loued her most, and trusted her also
He prayed her, that to no creature
She nolde telleu of his disfygure.
She swore him, nay for al ỹ world to win
She nolde do that villany, ne that syn
To make her husbonde haue so foule a name
She nold nat tell it for her owne shame
But natheles, her thought that she dyde
That she so longe shuld a counsayle hyde
Her thought it swole so sore about her hert
That nedely some word she must a sterte
And sith she durst tellen it to no man
Down to a marris fast by she ran
Vyl she came there, her hert was on a fyre
And as a bittour bumbeth in the myre
She laid her mouth vnto the water adowne
Bewray me not thou water with thy sowne
Quod she, to the I tell it, and to no mo
My husbonde hath long Asses eres two
Now is myn hert al hole, now it is out
I myght no longer kepe it out of dout.
Here mowe ye se, though we a tyme abyde
Yet out it mote, we can no counsayle hyde
The remnaunt of the tale, if ye wil here
Redeth Ouide, and there ye may it lere.
¶ This knight, of which my tale is specially
Whan that he sawe, he myght not come thereby
This is to say, what women louen most
Within his herte sorowful was his goost
But home he goeth, he myght not sojourne
The day was come, he nolde bode returne
And in his way, it happed him to ride
In al his care, under a forest syde
Where he sawe vpon a daunce go
Of ladyes foure and twenty, and yet mo
Toward the daunce, he drow him, & ỹ ryme
In hope that some wysedome shulde he lerne
But certaynly, er that he came fully there
Vanished was the daunce, he wyst not where
No creature sawe he that bare lyfe
Save in ỹ grene he sawe sitting an olde wife
A fouler wight there may no man deuyse
Ageine the knight the olde wife gan arise
And said: sir knight, here forth lyeth no way
Tell me what ye seken by your fay
Parauenture it may the better be
Thise olde folke conne muche thinge (qd she)
¶ My leef mother (qd this knight) certayne
I nam but dede, but if that I can sayne
What thing it is, that women most desyre
Coud ye me wisse, I wold quite wel your hire
Plight me thy trouth here in myn hond (qd she)
The nexte thing that I require of the
Thou shalt it do, if it be in thy myght

And

And I wol tel it you, or it be ·xyght.
Haue here my trouth (qd ꝑ knyzt) I graũt
Than quod she, I may me wel auaunt
Thy lyfe is safe, for I wol stonde therby
Upon my lyfe, the queme wyl say as I
Let se, which is the proudest of hem all
That weareth on a kerchefe or a call
That dare say nay, of that I shall you teche
Let vs go forth without lenger speche.
Tho rowned she a pistel in his ere
And bad him to be glad, and haue no fere.
When they ben come to ꝑ court, this knyzt
Said, he had held his day, as he had hight
And redy was his answere, as he sayde
Ful many a noble wyfe, and many a mayde
And many a wydow, for that they be wyse
(The queme her self, sitting as a iustyse)
Assembled ben, his answere for to here
And afterward this knight was bode apere
To every wight comaunded was silence
And that the knyght should tel in audience
What thing that worldly women loued best
This knight ne stode not stylle as doth a best
But to his question anon answerde
With manly voyce, that al the court it herde
My lige lady, generally, quod he
Women desyren to haue souerayne
As wel ouer her husbondes as her loue
And for to ben in maystrye hem aboue
This is your most desire, though ye me kill
Doth as you list, I am here at your wyll.
In al the court nas there wyfe ne mayde
Ne widowe, that contraried, that he sayde
But said, he was worthy han his lyfe
And with ꝑ word, up sterte the olde wyfe
Which ꝑ the knight fonde sitting on ꝑ grene
Mercy qd she my souerayne lady quene
Er that your court departe do me right
I taught this answere vnto this knight
For which he pledge me his trouth there
The first thing I wold of him requere
He would it do if it lay in his myght
Before the court than pray I the sir knyght
(Quod she) that thou me take vnto thy wife
For wel thou wost, ꝑ I haue kept thy lyfe
If I say falsse, say nay vpon thy fay.
This knight answerd, Alas and welaway
I wot ryght wel that such was my behest
For gode loue chese a newe requeste
Take al my good, and let my body go.
Nay qd she, than I shrewe vs both two
For though that I be foule, olde, and pore
I nolde for al the metall ne the ore
That vnder yerth is graue, or lythe aboue
But if I thy wyfe were and thy loue.
My loue (quod he) nay my dampnacion
Alas that any of my nacion
Shuld euer so foule disparaged be
But al for nought, the ende is this, that he
Constrayned was, ꝑ nedes muste he her wed
And taketh this olde wife, & goth to bed.
Now wolden some men say paraventure
That for my negligence, I do no cure
To tellen you the ioye and the array
That at the feest was that vlle day.
To the which thing answere shortly I shal
I say there nas no ioye ne feest at al
There nas but hevynesse and muche sorowe
For prively he wedded her on a morowe
And al day after hydde him as an owle
So wo was him, his wyfe loked so foule.
Gret was ꝑ sorow ꝑ knyzt had in his thoute
Whan he was in his wyfe a bedde yebrought
He waloweth, and turneth to and fro.
His olde wife lay smyling euermo
And said: O dere husbonde, O benedicite
Fareth every knyght thus as ye
Is this the lawe of king Arthurs house
Is every knyght of his so dangerous
I am your owne loue, and eke your wife
I am she, which that saued hath your lyfe
And certes yet dyd I neuer you vnright
Why fare ye thus with me the first nyght
Ye farn like a man that had lost his wit.
For, what is my gilt, for gode loue rede it
And it shall be amended if I may.
Amended qd this knyght, alas nay nay
It wil not ben amended neuer mo
Thou art so lothly, and so olde also
And therto comen of so lowe a kinde
That lytel wonder is thou I walowe & wynde
So wold god, qd he, myn hert wold breste
Is this, qd she, the cause of your vnreste
Ye certaynly quod he, no wonder nys.
Now sir, qd she, I couth amende al this
If that me lyst, er it were dayes thre
So wel ye myght bere you vnto me.
But for ye speke of such gentylnesse
As is discended out of olde richesse
That therfore shullen ye be gentylmen
Such arrogaunce is not worthe an hen.
Loke who that is most vertuous alway
Prevy and apert, and most entendeth aye
To do the gentyl dedes, that he can
Take him for the greatest gentilman.
Christ wolde we clamed of him our gentilesse
Nat.
For

Nor of our eldres, for our olde richesse
For they may yeue vs al her heritage
For which ye claymen to ben of hie parage
Yet may they not byqueth, for nothing
To none of vs, her vertuous lyuing
That made him gentylmen ycalled be
And bad vs folowen hem in such degre.
Well can the wise poete of Florence
That hight Daunte, speke in this sentence
Lo in such maner ryme is Dauntes tale
Ful seldé vp ryseth by his braunches smale
Prowesse of man: for god of his goodnesse
Wol that we clayme of him our gentylnesse
For of our eldres may we nothyng clayme
But temporal thing, ỹ mẽ may hurt & mayme
Eke euery wight wot this as wel as I
If gentylnes were planted naturally
Unto a certayne lynage down the lyne
Priuy & aperte, than wold they neuer fyne
To done of gentilnesse the fayre office
They might don no vilanye ne vice
Take fyre & beare it in to the derkest hous
Bytwixt this and the mount Caucasus
And let men shitte the doores, and go thenne
Yet wol the fyre as fayre lye and brenne
As twenty thousande men might it beholde
His office natural aye wol it holde
Up peryll of my lyfe, tyl that it dye.
Here may ye se well, how that genterye
Is not annexed to possession
Sythen folke don not her operation
Alway as doth the fyre, lo in his kynde
For god it wot, men may ful often fynde
A lordes sonne don shame and vilanye
And he that wol have prise of his gentrye
For he was borne of a gentyl house
And had his eldres noble and vertuouse
And nyl him selfe don no gentyl dedes
Ne folow his gentyl auncetre that deed is
He nys not gentyl, be he duke or erle
For vilaynes, synful dedes maketh a cherle
For gentilnesse nys but the renomie
Of thine auncetres, for her highe bountie
Which is a strong thing to thy persone
For gentilnesse commeth fro god alone
Than cometh our very gentylnesse of grace
It was nothyng byqueth vs with our place.
Thynketh how noble, as sayth Valerius
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius
That out of pouertie rose to hye noblesse
Redeth Seneck, and redeth eke Boece
There shal ye seen expresse, no drede is
That he is gentyle, that doth gentyle dedes
And therfore dere husbond, I thus conclude
Al were it that myn auncetres were rude
Yet may that hye god, and so hope I
Graunt me grace to lyue vertuously
Than am I gentil, whan I begynne
To lyue vertuously, and leuen synne.
And there as ye of pouertie me repryne
The hye god, on whom that we byleue
In wylful pouerte chese to lede his lyfe
And certes euery man, maide, and wyfe
May vnderstonde, Jesu heuen kyng
Ne wolde not chese a vicious lyuing.
Glad pouert is an honest thing certayne
This wol Seneck and other clerkes sayne
Who so wold hold him paide of his poure
I holde him riche, al had he not a shirte
He that coueyteth is a full poore wyght
For he wold han, that is not in his myght
But he ỹ nought hath, ne coueyteth to have
Is rich, although ye hold him but a knaue
Very pouert is synne properly
Juuenal sayth of pouert merily
The poore man, whan he goeth by the way
Byfore theues, he may synge and play
Pouert is hatefull good: and as I gesse
A ful great bringer out of busines
A great amender eke of sapience
To him that taketh it in pacience
Pouert is, although it seme elenge
Possession, that no wight wol chalenge.
Pouerte ful often, whan a man is lowe
Maketh his god and eke him selfe to knowe.
Pouert a spectacle is, as thinketh me
Through which one may his very frendes se
And therfore, syn that I you not greue
Of my pouert, no more me repreue.
Now sir, eke of elde ye repreued me
And certes sir, though none auctorite
Were in no boke ye gentyls of honour
Saine that men shuld an olde wight honour
And clepe hem father for her gentylnesse
And auctours shal I fynde, as I gesse.
Now there as ye sayn, ỹ I am foule & olde
Than drede you not to ben a cokewolde
For fylthe, elthe, and foule, also mote I the
Ben great wardeyns vpon chastite
But natheles, syn I know your delyte
I shal fulfyl your worldly appetyte
Chese now (qd she) one of these thinges twey
To have me foule and olde, tyl that I dey
And be to you a trewe humble wife
And neuer you displease in al my lyfe
Or elis wol you have me yong and faire

And

And take youre auenture of the repayre
That shall come to your houſe, bycause of me
Or in some other place, may well be
Nowe chese your seluen whether ꝑ you liketh
¶ This knight auiseth him, and sore siketh
But at the laste, he sayd in this maniere:
My lady and my loue, and wyfe so dere
I put me in youre wyse gouernaunce
Chesseth youre selfe, which may be more plesaunce
And most honour to you & me also
I do no force whether of the two
For as you lyketh, it suffiseth me.
Than haue I gote of you ꝑ mastry (qd she)
Syn I may chese, and gouerne as my lyste
Ye certes wyfe (qd he) I holde it for the beste
Kysse me (qd she) we be no lenger wrothe
For by my trueth, I woll be to you bothe
This is to say, to be bothe fayre and good
I praye to god that I mote sterue wood
But I to you be also good and trewe
As euer was wyfe, sithen ꝑ world was newe
And but I be to morowe as fayre to sene
As any lady, empresse, or quene
That is betwene Est and weste
Doth with my lyfe right as you leste
Cast vp the courteyn, and loke how it is.
¶ And when this knight sawe all this
That she so fayre was, and so yonge therto
For ioye hent her in his armes two
His herte bathed in the bathe of blysse
A thousande tymes a rowe he gan her kysse
And she obeyed him in euery thyng
That mought done him pleasure or likyng
And thus they lyued vnto her lyues ende
In parfite ioye: and Ielu Christ vs sende
Husbondes meke, yong, and freshe a bedde
And grace to ouerlyue hem that we wedde.
And I praye to god, to shorte her lyues
That wyll not be gouerned by her wyues
And olde, and angry nigardes of dispence
God sende hem sone a very pestylence.

¶ Here endeth the wyfe of Bathes tale, and here begynneth the Freres prologue

THys worthye lymytour, thys noble Frere
He made alwaye a maner louryng chere
Upon the Sompner, but for honeste
No bylaynes worde as yet to him spake he
But at the last, he sayd to the wyfe
Dame, god yeue you right good lyfe
Ye haue touched here, also mote I the
In scole matter, a full great difficulte
Ye haue sayd muche thyng right wel I saye
But dame, here as we ryden by the waye
Us nedeth not to spesen but of game
And lette auctorities a goddes name
To preching, and to schole of clergye.
But if it lyke vnto thys companye
I wol you of a Sompner tell a game
Parde ye maye well knowe by the name
That of a Sompner may no good be sayde
I pray, that none of you be yuell apayde
A Sompner is a renner vp and down
With maundementes, for fornication
And is ybeate at euery townes ende.
Tho spake our hoste a sayre: sir ye shuld ben
And curteys, as a man of youre estate
In this companye we wol no debate
Telleth youre tale, and let the Sompner be
Nay (qd the Sompner) let hym say to me
What so him lyste: when it cometh to my lote
By god I shall hym quite euery grote
I shall him tell whiche a greate honour
It is, to be a flatterynge lymytour
And eke of many an other maner crime
Whiche nedeth nat to reherse at thys time
And of his office I shall him tell ywis
Our hoste answerd: peace, no more of this
And afterwarde he sayd vnto the frere
Tel forth your tale, myn owne maister dere.

¶ Here endeth the Freres prologue, and here after followeth his tale.

WYthin the erchedeken, a man of hye degre
That boldly dyd execucion
In punyshinge of fornication
Of witchecrafte, and eke of baudrye
Of defamacion, and auoutrye
Of chirche reues, and of testamentes
Of contractes and lacke of sacramentes
Of vsery, and of symony also
But certes lecherours dyd he muche wo
They shouldden synge, yf they weren hent
And smale tythers they were foule shent

If any person wouldē vpon hem playne
There might astert hem no penunial payne
For small tithes, and smale offrynge
He made the people pesously to synge
For er the bishop caught hem with his hoke
They were in the archedekens boke
And than had he (through his iurdiction)
Power to done on hem correction
He had a Sompner redy to hys honde
A slyer boye was there non in Englonde
For subtelly he had his espiayle
That taught him where he might auayle
He couthe spare of lechours one or two
To techen hym to foure and twenty mo
For though this sōpner wode wer as an hare
To tell his harlotrye I woll not spare
For we ben out of his correction
They haue of vs no iurdiction
Ne nruer thullen, terme of all her liues.
(Peter so ben women of the stewes.
(Qd this Sompner) yput out of our cure.
Peace with mischaūce & with misaurture
Sayd our hoste, and let him tell his tale
Nowe telleth forth & lette the Sompner gale
Ne spareth not, myn owne maister dere.
(This false thefe, this sōpner (qd the frere)
Had alway baudes redy to his honde
As any hauke to lure, in Englonde
That telleth him al the secre that they knewe
For her aquayntaūce was nat come a newe
They were his aprouers priuely
He toke him selfe a great profite therby
His maister knewe not alway what he wan
Without maundement, a leude man
He coude sōmon, on payne of chrystes curse
And they were glad to fyllen his purse
And made him greate festes at the nale
And eyght as Judas had purses smale
And was a thefe: right suche a thefe was he
His maister had but halfe his duetye
He was (yf I shall yeue him his laude)
A thefe, a sompner, and eke a baude.
He had eke wenches of his retinue
That whether sir Roberde, or sir Hue
Or John, or Rafe, or who so that it were
That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere
Thus were the wenches and he of one assent
And he wolde fetche a fayned maundement
And sōmon hem to the chapiter bothe two
And pill the man, and let the wenche go
Than wold he say, frende I shall for thy sake
Do striken the out of our letters blake
Thou dare no more as in thys case trauayle
I am thy frende, there I maye the auayle
Certayne he knewe of bribries mo
Than possible is to tell in yeres two
For in this worlde nys doggge for the bowe
That can an hurt dere from an hole knowe
Bet than the Sompner knewe a sly lechour
Or auouter, or els any paramour
For that was the fruite of all his rente
Therfore on it he sette all his entente.
And so befell that ones on a day
This sompner wayting euer on his pray
Rode for to sōmon an olde wedowe a ribibe
Faynyng a cause, for he wolde haue a bribe
And happed that he sawe before him ride
A gay yoman vnder a forest syde
A bowe he bare, and arrowes bright & shine
He had vpon him a courtpie of grene
An hatte vpon his heed with stringes blake
Sir qd this sompner, hayle and wel ystake
Welcome qd he, and euery good felawe
Whider ridest þ vnder the grene wode hawe
Sayd this yoman, wolte thou ferre to day
This sompner him answerd, and sayd: nay
Here fast by (qd he) is myn entent
To riden, for to reysen vp a rent
That longeth to my lordes dwete.
Art thou than a bayly? ye (qd he)
He durst nat than, for very fylthe and shame
Say that he was a sompner, for the name
Depardieux, qd this yoman lefe brother
Thou art a bayly, and I am another
I am vnknowen, as in this countre
Of thyn acquayntaunce I wol pray the
And eke of brotherhed, if that thou lyst
I haue golde and syluer in my chist
Yf that ye happe to come in our shire
All shall be thyn, right as thou wolte desire
Grāūtmercy qd this sompner, by my faithe
Euerliche in other his trueth laithe
For to be swoine brethren, tyll they dey
And with that word they riden forth her wey
This sompner with þ, was as ful of iāgles
As ful of venym, as ben these wariangles
And euer requiring vpon euery thing
Brother qd he, wher is your dwelling
Another day, if that I shulde you seche
This yoman him answerd in softe speche
Brother qd he, ferre in the North contre
Where as I hope sometyme I shall the se
Or we departe, I shall the so well wisse
That of myn house thou shalte neuer misse.
Nowe brother qd the sompner, I you pray
Teche me, while we riden by the way

If

Lith that ye ben a baylye, as am I
Some subteite, tel me faithfully
In myne office, how I may most wynne
And spareth not for conscience ne for synne
But as my brother, tel me how don ye
Now by my trouth brother dere, sayd he
As I shal tellen the a faythful tale
My wages ben ful straite and smale
My lorde is hard to me and daungerous
And myn office ful labourous
And therfore, by extorcion I leue
Forsoth al that men wol me yeue
Algate by sleyght or by violence
From yere to yere, I wyn al my dispence
I can no better tellen faithfully
Now certes (qd the sompnour) so fare I
I spare not to take god it wote
But if it be to heuy or to hote
That I may getten in counsayle prively
No maner conscience of that I haue
Nere myn extorcion, I might not lyuen
Of such japes wol I not be shryuen
Stomake ne conscience know I non
I shrewe al these shrift fathers euerychon
Wel be we met by god and swet saint Jame
But leue brother, tel me thy name
Quod this sompner, in thys meane whyle
This yoman gan a lytle for to smyle
Brother qd he, wolte þ that I the telle
I am a fende, my dwellyng is in hell
And here I ride about my purchasing
To wete where I may get any thyng
My purchase is the effecte of all my rent
Loke how thou ridest for the same entent
To wyn good, thou reckest neuer how
Right so fare I, for ride wol I now
Into the worldes ende for a pray
Ah, qd this sompner, benedicite, what ye say
I wende ye were a yomon trewly
Ye haue a mannes shappe as wel as I
Haue ye a fygure than determynate
In hel, there ye ben in your estate
Nay certaynly qd he, there haue we non
But whan vs lyketh, we can take vs one
Or elis make you seme we ben shape
Somtyme lyke a man or lyke an ape
Or lyke an Angel can I ryde or go
It is no wonder thing though it be so
A lousy iuggler can disceue the
And parde yet can I more craft than he
Why qd þ Sompnour, ryde ye than or gon
In sondry shappe, and not alway in one
For we qd he, wol vs such forme make
Is moste able is our prayes for to take
What maketh you to haue all this labour
Ful many a cause lefe sir Sompnour
Sayd this fende, but all thyng hath tyme
The day is shorte, and it is passed pryme
And yet ne gote I nothyng in thys day
I wol entende to winning, if that I may
And nat entende our wittes to declare
For brother myne, thy wittes ben all to bare
To vnderstãde al, though I wold tel hem the
But for thou askest why labouren we
For sometyme be we goddes instrumentes
And meanes to done his commaundementes
When that him luste on his creatures
In diuers arte and in diuers fygures
Withouten him we haue no myght certayn
If that him liste to stonden there agayn
And sometyme at our praye haue we leue
Onely the body, and nought the soule to greue
Witnesse of Job, whom we deden wo
And sometime haue we might of bothe two
This is to sayn, of body and soule eke
And sometyme we ben suffred for to seke
Vpon a man, and don his soule vnrest
And nat his body, and all is for the best
Whan he withstandeth our temptacion
It is a cause of his saluacion
Al be it that it was not oure entent
He shulde be safe, but that we wold him hent
And sometime be we seruaunte vnto man
As the archbishoppe saynt Dunstan
And to the apostle eke seruaunt was I
yet tell me qd this Sompnour faithfully
Make ye you newe bodies thus alway
Of elementes the fende answerde nay
Sometyme we fayn, and sometyme we arise
With dede bodies in sondrie wise
And spoke as reuably, faire and well
As the Phitonesse did to Samuell
And yet wouldē some men say it was nat he
I do no force of your dremes
But o thing I warne the, I wol not jape
Thou wolt algates wete how we be shape
Thou shalt herafterward (my brother dere)
Come, where the nedeth not of me to lere
For thou shalt by thyne owne experience
Conne in the chaire rede of thys sentence
Bette than Vergyl, while he was on lyue
Or Dant also. Nowe lette vs ride blyue
For I wol holde company with the
Tyll it be so that thou forsake me
Nay qd this Sompnour þ shall not betide
I am a yoman knowen full wyde

By trouth wol I holde to ỳ, as in this caas
For though thou were the deuill Sathanas
By truoth wol I holde to my brother
As I am swore, and eche of vs to other
For to be trewe brother in this caas
And brother, we gon to our purchaas
Take thou thy parte, that men woll the yeue
And I shall myn, and thus shall we both leue
And if that any of vs haue more than other
Let him be trewe, & parte it with his brother
I graunt qd the deuill, by my fay
And vp that worde they riden forth her way
And right at themetyng of the townes ende
(To which the sompner shope him for to wende)
They sawe a carte, that charged was vp hay
Whiche that a carter droue forth on his way
Depe was the way, for which the carte stode
Thys carter smote, & stirred as he wer wode
Hait scot hait brok, what spare ye for ỳ stones
The fende qd he, you fetche body & bones
As ferforth as euer ye were yfoled
So muche wo as I haue for you tholed
The deuill haue all, both horse, carte, & hay
Qd this sompner, here shal we haue a pray
And nere the fende he drew, as nought ne were
Full priuely, and rowned in his ere
Herken brother herken, by thy faith
Herest thou what the carter saith?
Hent it anon, for he hath yeue it the
Both hay and carte, and eke his capies thre
Nay qd the deuill god wotte neuer a dele
It is not his entent trust me wele
Axe him thy selfe, yf thou trowest not me
Or els stynt a while and thou shalte se
This carter thacked his horse on the croupe
And they begon to drawe and to stoupe
Hait nowe qd he, that Jesu Christ you blisse
And al his handy werke, both more and lesse
That was well ywright myn owen liard boy
I pray god saue the and saynte Loy
Nowe is my carte out of the slowe parde.
Lo brother qd the fende, what tolde I the
Here may ye seen myn owne dere brother
The carle spake o thig but he thought another
Lette vs go forthe about our biage
Here wyn we nothing vpon carlage
When ỳ they comen, sō what out of the town
This Sompner to his brother gan to rowne
Brother qd he, here wonneth an olde rebecke
That had almoste as lefe to lese her necke
As for to yeue a peny of her good
I woll haue .xii. d. tho that she were wood
Or I wol sompne her to our office
And yet god wotte of her I knowe no vice
But for thou canst nat, as in this countre
Winne thy cost, take here ensample of me.
This Sōpner clappeth at ỳ wedo wes gate
Come out he sayd, thou olde beritrote
I trowe thou hast some frere or preest w the
Who clappeth there said this wife, benedicite
God saue you sir, what is your swete will
I haue qd he, of sōmons of the here a bill
Up payne of cursing loke that thou be
To morowe before our Archdeacons kne
To answere to the courte of certayne thynges
Nowe lorde qd she, Jesu kyng of kynges
So wisely helpe me, as I ne may
I haue ben sicke, and that ful many a day
I may nat go so ferre, qd she, ne ryde
But I be deed, so pricketh it in my syde
May I not aske a libell sir Sompnour
And answere there by my proctour
To suche thing as men wolde appose me
Yes qd this Sompner, pay anon let se
Twelfe pens to me, and I wil the acquite
I shall no profite haue here of but lite
My maister hath the profite and not I
Come of and lette me ridden hastely
Gyue me .xii. pens I may no lenger tary
Twelfe pens qd she, lady saynt Mary
So wisely helpe me out of care and synne
This wide world though I shoulde it winne
Ne haue I nat .xii. d. within my holde
Ye knowe well, that I am poore and olde
Kyth your almesse on me poore wretche
Nay than qd he, the foule fende me fetche
Yf I the excuse, though thou shuldest be spilt
Alas qd she, god wotte yet haue I no gilt
Pay me quod he, or by swete saynt Jame
I wol bere away thy newe panne
For dette, whiche thou owest me of olde
When thou madest thy husbonde cokolde
I payde at home for thy correccion
Thou lyest qd she, by my saluacion
Ne was I neuer er nowe, wedowe ne wife
Sompned vnto youre court in al my life
Ne neuer I nas but of body trewe
Unto the deuill blacke and rough of hewe
Yeue I thy body and my panne also.
And whan the deuil heard her curse so
Upon her knees, he said in this manere
Nowe Mably, myn owne mother dere
Is this your wil in ernest that ye sey?
The deuil qd she, fetche him er he dye
And panne and all, but he woll him repent.
Nay olde stotte, that is not myne entent

qd this Sompner, for to repent me
for anything that I haue had of the
I wold I had thy smocke and eurey clothe.
Nowe brother qd the deuil, be nat wrothe
thy body and this panne is myn by right
Thou shalt with me to hell yet to night
where thou shalte knowen of our priuite
More than a maister of diuinite
And with ỳ word the foule fende him hent
Body and soule, he with the deuyll went
where that sompners haue their heritage
And god that made after his ymage
Bankinde, saue and gyde vs and some
And leue the sompner good man to become
Lordings I coud haue told you, qd this frere
had I had leyser, of this sompner here
After the tert of Christe, Poule, and Johan
And of other doctours many one
Suche paynes, as your hertes might agrise
Albeit so, that no tonge may it deuise
Though ỳ I might a thousande winter tell
The peynes of that cursed house of hell
But for to kepe vs from that cursed place
Take, and prayeth Jesu of his grace
So kepe vs from the temptour Sathanas
Herkeneth this word, beware as i this cas
The lyon sitteth in his awayte alway
To slee the innocent, if that he may
Dispoileth aye your hertes to withstonde
The fende, ỳ you wolde make thral & bonde
He may not tempte you ouer your might
For Christ wol be your champion & knight
And prayeth, that this sompner him repente
Of his misdede, er that the fende him hente.

Here endeth the freres tale, & begynneth the Sompners prologue.

THys Sompner in hys stirropes hye stode
Upon thys Frere, his hearte was so wode
That lyke an aspen-lefe he quoke for yre
Lordinges (qd he) but one thing I desire
I you beseche, that of your curtesy
Sithens ye han herde this false frere ly
As suffereth me I may my tale tell
This frere bosteth that he knoweth hell
And god wote that is lytell wonder
Freres and fendes ben but lytell a sonder
For parde, ye han ofte tyme herde tell
Howe that a frere rauished was to hell
In spirite ones by a vision
And as an angel ledde him vp and doun
To shewe him the paynes that there were
In al the place saw he not a frere
Of other folke he saw ynowe in wo
Unto the aungell spake the frere tho
Nowe sir qd he, han freres suche a grace
That none of hem shall come in this place:
Yes qd this aungell, many a millyoun
And vnto Sathanas ladde he him adoun
And nowe hath Sathanas suche a tayle
Broder than of a Caryke is the sayle
Holde vp thy tayle thou Sathanas (qd he)
Shewe forth thyne ers, let the frere se
Where is the nest of freres in this place
And er that halfe a forlonge way of space
(Right as bees swarmen out of an hyue)
Out of the deuylles ers they gan dryue
Twenty thousande freres on a route
And throughout hell swarmed all aboute
And comen ayen, as fast as they might gon
And in to his ers they crepten euery chon
He clapte his tayle ayen, and lay ful stil.
This frere, whan he loked had his fyll
Upon the turmentes of this sory place
His spirite god restored of his grace
Unto his body ayen, and he awoke
But natheles, yet for fere he quoke
So was the deuylles ers aye in his mynde
That is his heritage of very kynde
God saue you al, saue this cursed frere
My prologue wol I ende in this manere.

Here endeth the Sompners prologue, and folowe th his tale.

LOrdinges there is in Yorkshire, as I gesse
A marshe countre called Holdernesse
In whiche there went a limitour aboute
To preache, and eke to begge, it is no doute
And so befell that on a day this frere
Had preached in a churche in hys manere
And specially abouen euery thinge
Exhorted he the people in his prechinge
To trentals, and to yeuen for goddes sake
Wherwith men might cen holy houses make
There as diuine seruice is honoured
Not there as it is wasted and deuoured
Ne there it ne deth not for to be yeuen

As to possessioners that mowen eis leuen
Thonked be god, in wele and haboundaunce
Trentals deliuereth (qd he) fro penaunce
Her frendes soules, as well olde as ponge
If that they be hastely ysonge
Not for to holde a preest holy and gay
(He signeth not but one messe a day)
Deliuereth out (qd he) anon the soules
Ful harde it is with flesshe hoke or with oules
To ben yclawed, or to brenne or bake
Now speedeth you hastely for Christes sake.
And when this frere had said all his entent
With qui cum patre, forth his way he went
Whe folk i church, had yeue hi what hem lest
He went his way, no lenger would he rest
With scrippe a tipped staffe, ytucked hye
In euery house he gan to pore and prye
And begged mele and chese, or els corne
His felowe had a staffe typped with horne
A payre of tables all of Iuory
And a pouncell polished fetously
And wrote alway the names as he stoode
Of al folke, that yaue hem any goode
Askaunce as he wolde for hem prey
Yeue vs a bushell wheate, malte, or rey
A goddes kychell, or a trypp of chese
Or els what ye lyst, I maye not chese
A goddes halfpeny, or a masse penny
Or yeue vs of your brawne, if ye haue any
A dagon of your blanket, leue dame
Our suster dere, lo here I write your name
Bacon or befe, or suche thing as ye fynde
A sturdy harlot went hem ay behynde
That was her hostes man, and bare a sacke
And that me yaue hem, layde it on his backe
And when he was out at the doze anone
He pouped away the names euerychone
That he before had written in his tables
He serued hem with nifles and with fables.
Nay ther thou lyest Sompner (qd the frere)
Peace (qd our host) for christes mother dere
Tell forth thy tale, and spare it not at all
So thriue I qd the Sompner, so I shall.
So long he went fro house to house till he
Came to an house, ther as he was wont to be
Refreshed more than in an hundred places
Sicke lay the good man, whose the place is
Bedred vpon a couche lowe he lay
Deus hic (qd he) O Thomas fred good day
Sayd this frere, curtesly and softe
Thomas god yelde it you, full ofte
Haue I vpon this benche faren full wele
Here haue I eaten many a mery mele
And fro the benche he droue away the cat
And layde adowne his potent and his ha
And eke his scrippe, and set hym softe adow
His felawe was go walked in to the tow
Forth with his knaue, in to that hostrye
Where as he shope hym ỳ like night to ly
O dere maister, quod this sicke man
Howe haue ye faren sythen March beg
I sawe you not this fourtenight and m
God wote (qd he) laboured haue I ful
And specially for thy saluacion
Haue I sayd many a precious orison
And for our other frendes, god hem blesse
I haue this day ben at your church at me
And sayd a sermon, after my simple witte
Not all after the text of holy writte
For it is harde to you, as I suppose
And therfore I woll teche you all the glos
Glosing is a glorious thinge certayne
For lettre sleeth, as we clerkes sayne
There haue I hem taught to ben charitab
And spende her good there as it is reasonab
And there I sawe our dame, a where is she
Yonder in the yerde I trowe she be
Sayd this man, and she wolcome anon
Eye maister welcome ye be by saint Jo
Sayd this wife, howe fare ye hertely
This frere ariseth vp full curtesly
And her embraseth in his armes narowe
And kisseth her swetely, a cherketh as a sp
Wh his lippes, dame (qd he) right wele (row
As he that is your seruaunt euery dele
Thanked be god, that you haue soule & lif
yet sawe I not this day so fayre a wife
In all the churche, so god saue me
ye god amende al faultes sir (qd she)
Algates welcome ye be, by my fay.
Graūt mercy dame, ỳ haue I foūde alwey
But of your great goodnesse, by your leue
I wol pray you, that ye not you greue
I wol with Thomas speke a litle throwe
These curates ben ful negligent & slowe
To groper tenderly a mannes conscience
In shrifte, & in preching is my diligence
And to studye on Peters wordes & Paules
I walke to fiche christen mennes soules
To yelde Jesu Christ his proper rent
To spede his wordes, is all myne entent.
Nowe by your leue dere maister (qd she)
Chideth him well for sayne charite
He is aye angry as a pysse myre
Though that he haue all that he can desire
Though I hi wyf a night, & make hi wary
And

nd ouer him lay my legge or myn arme
e groueth lyke our boze ꝑ lyeth in the stye
euer disporte of him right none haue I
may not please him in no maner caas.
Thomas, ie vous die, Thomas Thomas
this maketh ꝑ fede, this muste ben amẽded
it is a thing that god hyghly defended
no therof wol I speke a worde or two
Now maister (qd the wyfe) er that I go
what wolyr dyne? I wol go ther aboute.
Now dame (qd he) ie vous die sanz doute
aue I not of a capon but the lyuer
nd of your whyte breed, but a shyuer
nd after that a rosted pygges heed
but I nolde not for me no breil were deed)
hen had I nowe for my suffysaunce
am a man of lytel sustynaunce
y spirite hath hys fostryng in the Bible
y body is aye so redy and so penyble
o wake, that my body is distroyde
pray you dame, be ye nought anoyde
though I so frẽdly you my cõsaile shewe
y god, I nolde haue tolde it but a fewe
Nowe sir (qd she) but one worde er ye go
y childe is deed, within these wekes two
one after that ye wente out of this toun
his dethe sawe I by reuelacioun
sayd thys frere, at home in our dortoure
dare well sayne, er that halfe an houre
fter his dethe, I sawe him borne to blysse
nmyne auisyon, god me so wysse
o dyd our sexten, and our fermerere
hat han ben true freres this fyfty yere
hey may no3e, god be thanked of his lone
aken her iubely, and walken alone
nd by I arose, and all our couent eke
ith many a tere tryllyng on our cheke
ithouten noyse or clatteryng of belles
e deum was our songe, and nothyng elles
aue that to Christ I sayd an orison
hankyng him of my reuelacion
er sir and dame, trusteth me right well
our orisons been moze effectuell
nd moze we seen of Christes secret thinges
hã bozel folke, although they were kinges
e lyue in pouerte, and in abstinence
nd bozel folke in richelle and dispence
n meat and drinke, & in her foule delyte
e han this wozldly lust al in dispyte
azar and Diues, lyueden diuersely
nd diuers guerdons had they therby
ho so wol pray, he must fast & be clene
nd fatte his soule, & make his body lene
We fare as saith ꝑ apostell, clothe and foode
Suffiseth vs, though they be not ful goode
The clennesse & the fastyng of vs freres
Maketh that Christ accepteth our praieres.
Lo Moyses, fourty dayes & fourty myght
Fasted, er that the hye god of his myght
Spake with him in the mount of Synay
With empty wombe, fastyng many a day
Receyued he the lawe, that was written
With gods fynger, and hely well ye witten
In mount Oreb, er he had any speche
With the hygh god, that is oure soules leche
He fasted longe, and was in contemplaunce.
Aaron, ꝑ had the temple in gouernaunce
And eke the other priestes euerychone
Into the temple whan they shulde gone
To prayen for the people, & done seruice
They nolde drinke in no maner wyse
No drinke, that dronke might hem make
But there in abstynence pray and wake
Lest that they deyden, take hede what I say
But they be sobre that for the people pray
Wate that I say, no moze for to suffyseth
Our lorde Jesu, as holy writte deuyseth
yaue vs ensample of fastyng and prayeres
Therfore we mendicantes, we selv freres
Ben wedded to pouert and continence
To charite, humblenesse, and abstinence
To persecution for right wysnesse
To wepyng, mysericorde, and clennesse
And therfore may ye se that our prayeres
(I speke of vs mendicant, we freres)
Ben to the hie god moze acceptable
Than yours, with your tell at your table.
Fro Paradyse first, if I shal not lye
Was man chased out for his glotonye
And chast was man in paradyse certayne
But herken now Thomas what I shal sayn
I haue no tert therof, as I suppose
But I fynde it in maner of a glose
That specially our swete lorde Jesus
Spake this by freres, whan he sayd thus
Blessed be they that poze in spyrite ben
And so forth al the gospell may ye seen
Whether it be lyker our perfection
Or hers that swymmen in possession
Fye on her pompe, and on her glotonye
And in her leudenesse, I hem defye
Me thynketh they ben lyke Jouinyan
Fat as a whale, and walkyng as a swan
As bynolent as botel in the spence
Her prayer is of ful lytle reuerence
Whã they for soules say ꝑ psalme of Dauid

Ld boucke they syn(Cor merum eructauit)
Who foloweth Christes gospel & his lore
But we that humble be, chaste, and poore
Werkers of gods worde, & not auditours
Therfore right as an hauke at a sours
Up springeth in to the eyre, so prayeres
Of charitable and chaste busy freres
Maken her sours to gods eares two
Thomas Thomas, so mote I ride or go
And by that lorde that cleped is saint yue
Ne ȳ our broder were, ȳ shuldest not thriue
For in our chapitre pray we day and night
To Christ, that he the sende helth & myght
Thy body for to welden hastely.
God wotte qd he, nothyng therof fele I
As helpe me Christ, as in fewe yeres
Haue I spended vpon diuers maner freres
Wel many a pound, yet fare I neuer the bette
Certayne my good haue I almost besette
Farwel my good, for it is almost ago.
The frere answered, o Thomas dost ȳ so
What nedeth the diuerse freres seche
What nedeth him that hath a parfite leche
To seche an other leches in the toune
Your inconstaunce is your confusioun
Holde ye me than, or ris our couent
To prayen for you insufficient
Thomas, that iape nis not worthe a myte
Your maladye is for we haue to lyte
A, yeue that couent halfe a quarter otes
And yeue that couent foure & twenty grotes
And yeue that frere a penny, and let him go
Nay nay Thomas, it may nothyng be so
What is a farthig worth parted in twelue
Lo, eche thing that is oned in him selue
Is more stronge, than whan it is so shatered
Thomas, of me thou shalte not be shatered
Thou wolde haue al our labour for nought
The bee god ȳ al this world hath wrought
Sayth, ȳ the workman is worthy his hire
Thomas, naught of your treasoure I desire
As for my selfe, but that all our couent
To pray for you is ay so dyligent
And for to buylden Christes owne chyrche
Thomas, if ye wol leue for to wyrche
Of buyldyng vp of chirches may ye fynde
If it be good, in Thomas lyfe of Inde.
Ye lyggen here ful of angre and of yre
With which ȳ diuel setteth your hert on fyre
And chyden here this holy innocent
Your wife, that is so meke and patient
And therfore trowe me Thomas if you lyste
Ne chyde not with thy wyfe, as for the beste
And beare this worde away by thy fayth
Touchyng suche thyng, lo what ȳ wise
Within thy house be thou no lyon
To thy subiectes do thou none oppression
Ne make not thyn aquayntaunce to fle
And yet Thomas, eftsones charge I the
Beware of her that in thy bosome slepeth
Ware the of the serpent, that so slyly crepeth
Under the grasse, and stingeth full subtelly
Beware my sonne, and herken patiently
That twēty thousād men han lost her lyues
For striuing with her lemmans & her wyues
Now sens ye haue so holy and meke a wyf
What nedeth you Thomas to make strife
There nys twyste no serpent so cruell
When men treden on his tayle ne halfe so fel
As a womā is, whā she hath caught an yre
Vengeaunce is than all her desyre.
Ire is a synne, one of the greatest of seuen
Abhominable vnto the hygh god of heuen
And to him selfe it is a distruction
This euery leude vicare and parson
Can say, how yre engendreth homicyde
Ire is in sothe the executour of pride
I could of yre say so muche sorowe
That my tale shuld last tyl to morowe
And therfore I pray god both day and night
That to an vrous man he sende lyte myght
It is great harme, and eke great pyte
To set an vrouse man in hie degre.

Whylom there was an vrous potestate
As saith Seneke, that duryng his estate
Vpon a day out rydden knightes two
And as fortune wolde it shuld be so
That one of hem came home, ȳ other nought
Anon the knight before the iudge is brought
That said thus: thou hast thy felowe slayn
For which I deme the to the deth certayne
And to another knyght commaunded he
Go lede him to the deth I charge the
And hapned as they went by the wey
Toward the place, there he shuld dey
The knyght came, which mē wēd had be dēd
Than thought they it was the best rede
To lede hem both to the iudge agayne
They sayden lord, the knight hath not slayn
His felow, here he stant hole alyue.
Ye shullen be deed (qd he) so mote I thriue
That is to say, both one, two, and thre
And to the first knight, right thus spake he.
I dampned the, thou must algate be deed
And thou must also lese nedes thyn heed

For

For thou art cause why thy felawe deyth
And to the third knight, right thus he sayth
Thou hast not done that I cómaunded the
And thus he dyd hem sleen all thre.

Trouse Cambyses was eke dronkelewe
And aye delyted him to ben a shrewe
And so hyrel, a lorde of his meyne
That loued wel bertuous mozalyte
Sayd on a day bytwixt hem two right thus
A lorde is lost, if he be aught vycious
And dronkennesse eke is a foule recorde
Of any man, and namely of a lorde
There is many an eye and many an eere
Awaytyng on a lorde, he not where
For gods loue drinketh moze temperatly
Wyne maketh a man to lese wretchedly
His myndc, and his lymmes euerychone.
The ryuers shalt thou se (qd he) anone
And preue it by thyn owne experience
That wyne ne doth to folke no suche offence
There nys no wyne byreueth me my myght
Of honde, of foote, ne of myn eye syght
And for dispyte he dronke mochell moze
An hundred tymes than he dyd before
And right anon, this cursed vylous wretche
Let this knyghtes sonne byfozne him fetche
Cómaunding him he shuld byfozne him stóde
And sodainly he toke his bowe in honde
And vp the strynge he pulled to his eere
And at an arrowe he slough the chylde there.
Now whether haue I a syker hód or none
Qd he, is all my might and myndc agone
Hath wyne byreuen me myne eyen syght
What shuld I tel the answer of the knight
His sonne was slayne, ther is no moze to say
Beware therfore, with lordes how ye playe
Syng Placebo, and I shal if I can
But if it be vnto a pore man
To a pore man, one shuldc his vices tell
But not to a lord, though he shuld go to hell.

Loyous Cirus, thilke Persien
Howe distroyed he the ryuer of Gysen
For that an horse of hys was dreynt therin
When he went Babylone to wynne
He made that the ryuer was so small
That men mighte ryde and waden ouer all
Lo, what sayd he, that so wel teche can
Ne be no felowe to none vylous man
Ne with no wode man walke by the way
Leste thou repent, I wol no farther say.
Now Thomas leue brother, leaue thyn yre
Thou shalte me fynd as iust, as is a squire
Holde not the dyuels knyfe aye in thyn herte
Thyne angre doth the al to sore smerte
But shewe to me all thy confession.
¶ Nay (qd the sicke man by sayne Symon
I haue be shrine this day of my curate
I haue tolde him all myne estate
Nedeth no moze to spekc of it, saith he
But if me lyst, of myne humilite.
yeue me thā of thy gold, to make our cloister
Qd he, for many a muskle & many an oyster
Whan other men haue ben ful wel at ese,
Hath ben our foode, our cloystre for to rese
And yet god wot, vnneth the foundamente
Parfourmed is, ne of our pauement
Is not a tile yet within our wones
By god we owen fourty pounde for stones
Now helpe Thomas, for him that harowed hel
For els mote we our bokes sel
And if you lacke our predication
Than goth this world al to destruction
For who so wolle fro this worlde vs byreue
So god me saue, Thomas by your leue
He wold byreue out of this world the sonne
For who can rechen & worchen as we conne
And that is not of lytle tyme (qd he)
But sith Helye was, or Helyse
Han freres ben, that fynde I of recorde
In charite, ythonked be our lorde
Now Thomas, for sayne charite
And downe anon he syttcth on his knee.
¶ This sicke man wore nye woode for yre
He wolde the frere had ben a fyre
With his falsc dissimulacion
Suche thinges as ben in my possession
(Qd he that may I geue, and none other
Ye sain me thus, how ỹ I am your brother.
Ye certes (qd this frere trusteth me wele
I toke our dame our letter and our sele.
¶ Now (qd he) wel, a somwhat shal I yeue
Vnto your holy couent, while I leue
And in thine honde, thou shalt it haue anone
On this condition, and other none
That thou depart it so, my leue brother
That euery frere, haue as muche as other
This shalt thou swere on thy profession
Without fraude or caueiacion.
¶ I swere it (qd the frere) by my fayth
And therwithal his honde in his he layth
Lo here my faith, in me shall be no lacke.
¶ Than put thyn honde down by my backe
Sayd this man, and grope wel behynde
Byneth my buttocke, there thou shalte fynde

I thynk that I haue hyd in pryuite
Wel, thought the frere, that shall go with me
Adowne he sheteth his hand to the clyfte
In hope to fynde there some good gyfte
And whan this sicke man felte this frere
Aboute his towell, gropyng here and there
Amyd his honde, he let the frere a farte
There nys no capell, drawyng in a carte
That myght haue let a fart of suche a soun.
The frere vp startr, as doth a wode lyon
I false chorle (qd the frere) for goddes bones
This hast thou in dispyte do, for the nones
Thou shalt abye this farte, if I may
His meyny, that herde of this affray
Came lepyng in, and chased out the frere
And forth he goth, with a ful angry chere
And fette his felowe, there as lay his store
He loked as he were a wylde bore
He grynned his tethe, so was he wrothe
A sturdy pace down to the court he gothe
Wher as there wõned a man of gret honour
To whom that he was alway confessour
This worthy man, was lord of that village
This frere came, as he were in a rage
Where as this lord sat eatyng at his borde
Vnnethes myght the frere speke o worde
Tyl at the last he sayd, god you se.
This lorde gan loke, and said benedicite
What frere Iohn, what maner world is this
I se wel that somethyng is a mys
Ye loke as thouȝ ꝑ wood were ful of theuis
Syt down, and tell me what your grefe is
And it shal be amended, if that I may.
I haue (qd he) had a dispite to day
God yelde it you, adowne in your village
That in this worlde, is none so poore a page
That he nolde haue abhominacioun
Of that I haue receyued in your toun
And yet me greueth nothing so sore
As that the olde churle, with lockes hore
Blasphemed hath our holy conuent eke.
Now maister (qd this lord) I you beseke
No maister sir (qd he) but seruitour
Though I haue had in schole that honour
God lyketh not, that men vs Raby calle
Neyther in market, ne in your large halle.
No force (qd he) but tel me of your grefe.
Sir (qd this frere) an odious mischefe
This day is betyde, to myne ordre, and to me
And so per consequens to eche degre
Of holy churche, god amende it sone.
Sir (qd the lorde) ye wot what is to done
Distempre you not, you ben my confessour
ye ben the salte of the erth, and the sauour
For goddes loue your pacience now holde.
Telleth me your grefe: and he anon him tolde
As ye han herd byfore, ye wot wel what
The lady of the house, aye styll sat
Tyl she had herde what the frere saide.
Eye gods mother (qd she) a blyssful mayde
Is there nought els, tel me faythfully
Madame (qd he) howe thynketh ye therby
Howe that me thynketh: so god me spede
I say a churle hath done a churles dede
What shulde I say, god let him neuer the
His licke heed is ful of vanite
I holde him in a maner of frenesye.
Madame (qd he) by god I shall not lye
But I in any wyse may ben on him a wreke
I shal saunder him ouer al, where I speke
That false blaspheмour, that charged me
To parte it, that might not departed be
To euery man lyche, with mischaunce.
The lord sat styll, as he were in a traunce
And in his herte he roled vp and doun
Howe that this churle had ymaginacioun
To shewe such a probleme to the frere
Neuer erst or now ne herde I suche a matere
I trowe the dyuel put it in his mynde
In all Irsmetrike, there shal no man fynde
Byfore this day, of suche a questien
Who shulde make a demonstracion
That euery man shulde haue lyke his parte
Of a sowne or sauour of a farte
O myce proude churle, I shrewe thy face.
Lo sirs (qd the lord) with hard grace
Who euer herde of suche a thyng or no we
To euery man lyke, tell me howe
It is an impossible, it may not be
Eye myce churle, god let him neuer the
The rombleyng of a farte, and euery soun
Nys but of eyre reuerberacioun
And euer it wasteth lytel and lytel away
There is no man can demen, by my fay
If that it were departed equally
What lo my churle: lo, yet how shrewdly
Vnto my confessour to day he spake
I holde him certayne a demoniake.
Now eteth your meate, and let ꝑ churle go play
Let him go hongen him selfe a dyuel way.
Now stode the lordes squier at the borde
That carfe his meate, and herd word by worde
Of al thing, of whiche I haue you sayde
My lorde (qd he) be not yuell apayde
I couthe tel for a gowne clothe
To you sir frere, so that ye ben not wrothe

How

how that this farte shuld euyn ydeled be
Amonges your couent, if it lyketh the.
Certes (qd ꝑ lorde) a thou shalt haue anon
A gowne clothe, by god a by sayntе John
My lorde (qd he) whan ꝑ the weder is faire
Without en winde, or perturbyng of ayre
Let bring a carte whele here into this hall
But loke he haue his spokes all
Twelue spokes hath a carte whele cõmenly
And bryng me than .xii. freres, wote ye why
For thyrteene is a couent as I gesse
Your confessour here, for his worthynesse
Shal performe up the nombre of his couẽt
Thã shulle they kneien adown by one assent
And to every spokes ende, in this manere
Ful sadly lay his nose shall a frere
Your noble confessour there, god him saue
Shal holde his nose upright under the naue
Than shal this churle, w̃ belly stylle a tought
As any tabour, hither ben yebrought
And set him on the whele, right of this carte
Upon the naue, a make him iet a farte
And ye shullen se, up peryl of my lyfe
By preue, whiche is demonstratife
That equally the sowne of it wil wende
And eke the stynke, unto the spokes ende
Saue ꝑ this worthy man your cõfessour
(Bycause he is a man of great honour)
Shall haue the first frute, as reson is
The noble vsage of freres yet is this.
The worthest mã of hem shull first be serued
And certainly, he hath it wel deserued
He hath to day taught vs so moche good
With preching in the pulpet there he stood
That I may voucheſafe, I say for me
He had the first smell of fartes thre
And so wolde al his brethren hardely
He bereth him so fayre and holyly.
The lord, ꝑ lady, a eche mã, saue the frere
Sayd that Jenken spake in this matere
As wel as Ouyde dyd or Ptholome
Touching the churles sayde subtilte
And bye wyt made him speke as he spake
He was no foole, ne no demonyake
And Jenken hath ywonne a newe gowne
My tale is done, we ben almoste at towne.

Here endeth the Sompners tale, and here folowyth the clerkes of Orenfordes prologue.

Et clerke of Oxford, our host sayde
Ye ryde as styll and coye, as doth a mayde
Were newe spoused, sittynge at the borde
This day ne herd I of your mouth a worde
I trowe that ye studyen aboute some sophyme
But Salomon saith, al thyng hath tyme
For goddes sake, bethe of better chere
It is no tyme nowe to studye here
Tell vs some mery tale by your fay
For what man is entred in to a play
He nedes mote unto that play assent
But precheth not, as freres done in lent
To make vs for our olde synnes to wepe
Ne that thy tale make vs not to slepe
Tel vs some mery thyng of auentures
Your termes, your figures, a your colours
Kepe hem in store, tyl so be that ye endyte
Hygh style, as whan men to kynges write
Speketh so playne at this time, I you pray
That we may understonde what ye say.
This worthy clerke benygnly answerde
Host (qd he) I am under your yerde
Ye haue of vs as nowe the gouernaunce
And therfore wol I do you obeysaunce
As farre as reason asketh hardely
I wol you tell a tale, whiche that I
Lerned at Padow, of a worthy clerke
As preued is by his wordes and his werke
He is nowe deed, and nayled in his chiste
I pray to god sende his soule good reste.
Fraunces Petrarke, the laureat poete
Hyght this clerke, whose rhetorike sweete
Enlumyned all Itayle of poetrye
As Liuyan dyd of Philosophye
Or lawe, or other arte perticulere
But deth ꝑ wol not suffre vs dwellen here
But as it were the twynklyng of an eye
Hem both hath slayne, a all we shal dye.
But for to tellen of this worthy man
That taught me this tale, as I first began
I say that he first with hie style endyteth
(Or he the body of his tale writeth)
A proheme, in which discriueth he
Piemount, and of Saluce the countre
And speketh of Apenny the hylles hye
That ben the boundes of west Lumbardye
And of mount Vesulus in speciall
Where as the Poo, out of a wel small
Taketh his first spring and his cours
That estwarde euer increseth in his cours

To Cecile ward, to ferue, and to worshyp
The which a long time were to deuise
And truely, as to my iudgement
Me thinketh it a thinge impertinent
Saue that him lyst contrary his maistre
But this is his tale as ye shullen here.

¶ Here endeth the prologue of the clerke of Oxforde, and here folowerth his tale.

Here is, in the west syde of Italye
Down at ꝑ rote of Vesulus the colde
A lusty playne, habundaunt of vitaylle
Where many a towne and tour ꝑ maist beholde
That founded were, in time of fathers olde
And many another delectable syghe
And Saluces, this noble countre hyght,

¶ A Marke whylom was in that londe
As were his worthy eldres him before
And obeysaunt ayt redy to his bonde
Were all his liges, both lesse and more
Thus in delite he lyued, and hath done yore
Beloued and drad, through fauour of fortune
Both of his lordes and of his commune.

¶ Therwith he was, as to speke of lynage
The gentilest yborne of al Lombardy
A fayre person, and strong, and yonge of age
And ful of honour and curtesye
Discrete inowe, his countre for to gye
Saue in some thynges he was to blame
And Walter was thys yonge lordes name

I blame him thus, that he considered nought
In tyme comming, what him might betyde
But on his lust present was all his thought
And for to hauke and hunte on euery syde
Wel my all other cures let he slyde
And eke he ne wold, that was worst of all
Wedde no wife, for ought that myght befall

¶ Only that point hys people bare so sore
That flockmele on a day to him they went
And one of hem, that wisest was of lore
(Or els that the lorde wolde best assent
That he should tel him what his people ment
Or els coude he shewe suche matere)

he to the Marke said, as ye shullen here.

¶ O noble Marques, your humanyte
Assureth vs, and preueth vs hardinesse
As ofte tyme as is necessite
That we may to you tell our heuynesse
Accepteth lorde of your gentylnesse
That we to you with pitous hert playne
And let your eares nat my voice disdayne

¶ Al haue I not to done in this matere
More than another hath in this place
Yet for as moche, as ye my lorde so dere
Haue alway shewed me fauour and grace
I dare the better aske of you a space
Of audience, to shewen our requeste
And ye my lorde to done right as you leste

¶ For certes lorde: so wel vs lyketh you
And all your werkes, what euer haue don, ꝑ we
Ne could our owne selfe deuisen how we
We myght more lyuen in felycite
Saue one thing lorde, if it your wyl be
That for to be a wedded man, you lest
Cha wer your people in sourrain herte at

Boweth your necke bender the blyssful yoke
Of sourrayntye, and not of seruise
Which men clepen spousayle or wedlocke
And thinketh lord, among your thoughtes wyse
How that our dayes passen in sondry wise
For though we slepe or wake, rome, or ryde
Ay fleeth the time, it wol no man abyde

And though your grene youth floure, as ye
In creepeth age al way as stylle as stone
And deth manaseth euery age, and smyte
In eche estate, for there escapeth none
And also certain, as we knowen echone
That we shul dye, as uncertayne we al
Ben of that day, that deth shall on vs fal

¶ Accepteth than of vs the trewe entent
That neuer yet refused your heste
And we wol al lorde, if ye wol assent
Chese you a wyfe in shorte tyme, at the lest
Borne of the gentilest and of the meste
Of al this londe, so that it ought seme
Honour to god and you, as nere as we can deme

¶ Deliuer vs out of al this busy drede
And take a wyfe, for hye goddes sake
For if it so befell, as god forbede

That thorow deth, your linage shuld slake
And that a straunge successour shuld take
Your heritage, O, wo were vs on lyue
Wherfore we pray you hastely to wyue.

Thermeke prayer and her pitious chere
Made the Markes for to haue pyte
And sayde (quod he) myn owne people dere
To that I neuer erst thought, constrayne me
I me reioyced of my lyberte
That selder tyme is founde in mariage
There I was free, I mote ben in seruage.

But natheles, I se your true entente
And truste vpon your wyt, & haue done aye
Wherfore of my fre will I will assente
To wedden me, as sone as euer I may
But there, as ye haue proffred me to day
To chese me a wife, I pon reiese
That thyrde, & pray you of that profer ese

For god it wote, that children ofte ben
Unlyke her worthy eldres, hem before
Bounte cometh all of god, & not of the streem
Of which they ben engendred and thore
I truste in goddes bounte, and therfore
My mariage, myn estate, and rest
I him betake, he may don as him lest.

Let me alone in chesyng of my wife
That charge vpon my backe I wol endure
But I you pray, and charge vpon your lyfe
That what wife I take, ye me ensure
To worship her, whyles her lyfe may dure
In worde and werke, here, and eke where
As she an Emperours doughter were

And furthermore, this shal ye swere, þ ye
Assent my choice shal neuer grutch ne stryue
In erthe I shal forgo my lyberte
At your requeste, as euer more I thryue
There as myn herte is set, there wol I wyue
And but ye will assent, in suche manere
I pray you speketh nomore in this matere.

With herty wyl they swore and assent
To all this thing, there sayd no wight nay
Besechyng him of grace er they went
That he wolde hem graunt a certayne day
Of his spousaile, as soone as euer he may
For yet alway the people somwhat dredde
Lest this Markes wolde no wife wedde.

The graunted hem a day, such as him lest
On whiche he wolde be wedded certayn
And sayd he dyd all this at her request
And they with humble entent ful buxumly
Knelyng vpon her knees ful reuerently
Him thonked all, and thus they han an ende
Of her entent, and home ayen they wende

And here vpon he tok his officers
Comaundinge for the feest to purueye
And to his priuy knyghtes and squiers
Suche charge yaue, as he lyste on hem lay
And they to his comaundement obey
And eche of hem doth his diligence
To don to the feest reuerence

Explicit pars prima et
sequitur secunda.

Sought ferre fro thilke place honorable
Where this Markes shope his mariage
There stode a thorpe, of syght ful delectable
In whiche poore folke of that village
Hadden her beestes and her pasturage
And of her labour tok her sustenaunce
After that the erthe yaue hem habundaunce

Amonge this poore folke, ther dwelled a man
Whiche that was holden poorest of hem all
But hye god sometyme sende can
His grace into a litel oxe stall
Janicola men of that thorpe him call
A doughter had he, fayre ynoughe to sighte
And Griselde this yonge maiden highte.

But for to speke of vertuous beaute
Than was she one the fayreste vnder sonne
For full pourely yfostred was she
And lyttel keruing wist she in her tyme
Well ofter of the well than of the tonne
She dronke, and for she wolde vertue plese
She knewe wel labour, but non ydle ese.

But though this mayde were tender of age
Yet in the brest of her virginite
There was enclosed, sadde and ripe corage
And in great reuerence of charite
Her olde poore father fostred she
A fewe sheepe spinning on the feld she kept
She wolde not ben idle til she slept.

And whe she homward came, she wold bring
Wortes and herbes, rotes ful ofte

Wchiche she shadde a sethe for her liuyng
And made her bed full harde, & nothing softe
And aye she kept her fathers lyfe on lofte
With euery obeysaunce and diligence
That child might do to the fathers reuerence

¶ Upon Grisylde the poore creature
Well ofte hath the Markes set his eye
As he an huntynge rode paraventure
And when it fell, that he might her aspye
He (not with wanton lokyng of folye)
His eyen caste vpon her, but in sadde wise
Upon her chere, he wouide him ofte auise.

¶ Cómendinge in his hert her womanhede
And eke her vertue, passyng euery wight
Of so yonge age, as well in chere as in dede
For though the people haue no great insight
In vertue: he considered full ryght
Her bounte, and disposed that he wolde
Her wedde, if he euer wedde sholde.

The day of weddyng com, but no wight can
Tell, what woman it shoulde be
For whiche meruayle, wondred many a man
And sayden, whan they were in her presence
Wol not our lorde yet leaue his vanite
Will he not wedde, alas alas, the while
Why will he thus himselfe and vs begile.

¶ But nathelesse this Markes hath do make
Of gemmes, set in golde and in asure
Broches and ryuges, for Grisyldes sake
And of her clothyng, toke he the mesure
Of a mayden lyke to her stature
And eke of other ornamentes all
That to suche a weddyng shoulde fall

¶ The tyme vndren, in the same day
Approched, that the weddyng shulde be
And all the paleys put was in array
Bothe halle and chambre, eche in his degre
Houses of office stuffed with great plente
There mayst thou se all daynteous vitayle
That may be foude, as fer as lasteth Italy

¶ This royall Markes, rychely arayde
Lordes and ladyes in his compayne
The whiche that to the feest were prayde
And of his retinue the bachelerye
With many a sowne of sondrie melodye
Unto the village, of whiche I tolde
In this aray, the right way hath holde

¶ Grisilde (god wote of this full innocent
That for her was shape all thys aray)
To fetche water at a wel went
And cometh home as sone as euer she may
For wel she heard say, that yike day
That the Markes shulde wed, & if she might
She wolde fayne seen some of that sight.

She thought: I wold vth other maidens stode
That ben my felowes in our doore and se
The Markes, and therto wol I fonde
To done at home, as sone as it may be
The labour, whiche that longeth to me
And than may I at leyser it beholde
If she the way to the castel holde.

¶ And as she wolde ouer the threshholde gon
The Markes came, and gan her for to call
And she sette downe her water potte anon
Beside the threshholde of the ore stall
And downe vpon her knees she gan to fall
And vth sadde countenaunce knelid styll
Tyl she had herd what was the lordes will

¶ This thoughtful Markes spake to ỳ mayde
Wel soberly, and sayd in this manere
Where is your father Grisylde, he sayde
And she with reuerence and mekenesse chere
Answered, lord he is al redy here
And in she gothe, without lenger lette
And to the Markes she her father fette

¶ He be the honde than toke this olde man
And sayd thus, whan he had him aside
Janycola, I neyther may ne can
Longer the plesaunce of myne hert hyde
If that thou vouchesafe, what so euer betide
Thy doughter wol I take, or that I wende
As for my wyfe, to my lyues ende.

Thou louest me, I wot wel certayne
And art my faithfull liege man ybore
And al that lyketh me, I dare well sayne
It lyketh the, and specially therfore
Tel me that poynt, that I haue said before
If that thou wolt to this purpose drawe
To take me for thy sonne in lawe.

¶ This sodayne case, the man astoned so
That reed he wext abaisshed, & all quakyng
He stode, ne vneth sayd he wordes mo
But only thus (quod he) lorde my wyllyng
Is as ye wol, ne ayenst your lykyng

I wol

I wol nothyng, ye be my lorde so dere
Right as you lyst, gouerne this matere.

Than wol I thus (qd this Markes) sothly
That in thy chambre, I, you, and she
Haue a collation, and woteſt thou why?
For I wol aske her, if her wyll be
To be my wife, and rule her after me
And all this shall she done in thy presence
I wol not speke out of thyn audience

And in the chambre, whyle they were about
The tretes, whiche ye shall after here
The people came into the house without
And wondred hem, in howe honeſt manere
Potentially she kept her father dere
But vtterly Grisylde wonder might
For neuer erſt sawe she suche a sight.

No wonder is though she be astoned
To se so great a geſt come in to that place
She was neuer to suche geſtes woned
For whiche she loked with ful pale face
But shortly fro this mater for to pace
These were the wordes ỳ the Markes sayd
To this benigne and verey faythfull mayd

Grisilde he sayd, ye shall well vnderſtonde
It lyketh vnto your father and me
That I you wedde, and eke it may so stonde
As I suppose, that ye wol that it so be
But these demaundes I aske first (qd he)
That sithen it shall be done in hasty wise
Wol ye therto assent, or els you auise.

I say thus, be ye redy with good herte
To all my lyſte, and that I frely may
As me best liketh, though ye laugh or smerte
And neuer ye to grutche, night ne day
And than I say yea, that ye say not ones nay
Neither i worde, ne by frowning coũtenaũce
Swere this, & here I swere our alyaunce.

Wondring vpon these wordes, quaking for
She sayd: lord, indigne & vnworthy (diede
Am I, to thylke honour that ye me bede
But right as you wol, so wol I
And here I swere, that neuer wyllingly
In word, werke, ne thought, I nil you disobie
For to be deed, though me were loth to dye.

This is ynough Grisilde myn (qd he)
And forth he goth with a sobre chere
Out at the dore, and after came she
And to the people, he sayd in this manere
This is my wife, (qd he) that stondeth here
Honoureth her, & loueth her, I you pray
Who so me loueth, there nis no more to say.

And for that nothing of her olde gere
She shulde bring in to hys house, he badde
That womẽ shuld dispoyle her right there
Of which these ladies were nothing gladde
To hãdle her clothes, in which she was clad
But natheleſſe, this mayden bright of hewe
Fro fote to heed they clothed han all newe.

Her heer han they kembed, ỳ lay vnreſſed
Ful rudely, and with her fingers smale
A crowne on her heed they han ydreſſed
And sette it ful of ouches great and smale
Of her array, what shulde I make a tale
Vnneth the people her knew for her fayrneſſe
When she transformed was in suche richeſſe

This Markes hath her spoused with a ringe
Brought for the same cause, & then her set
Vpon an horse snowe white, wel amblinge
And to hys paleys, or he lenger let
With ioyfull people, that her ladde and met
Conueyed her, & thus the day they spende
In reuell, tyl the sonne gan discende

And shortely forth this tale for to chace
I say, that to this newe Markeſſe
God hath ysent suche fauour of his grace
That it semed not, as by her lykelyneſſe
That she was borne and fedde in rudeneſſe
As in a cote, or in an ox stall
But norisshed in an emperoures hall.

To euery wight, she woxen is so dere
And worshipful, ỳ folk ther as she was bore
And fro her byrthe, knewe her yere by yere
Vnneth trowed they, but durſt haue swore
That to Janicola, of which I spake before
She doughter nas, for as by coniecture
Hem thought she was another creature,

For though that euer vertuous was she
She was encreased in suche excellence
Of thewes good, set in hye bounte
And so discrete, and fayre of eloquence
So benigne, and digne of reuerence
And coude the peoples hertes so embrace
That eche her loued that loked in her face.

Not

Not onely of Saluce in the town
Publyshed was the bountie of her name
But eke beside, in many a regioun
If one sayde wel, an other sayd the same
So spradde of her bountie the fame
That men & wimmen, bothe yonge and olde
Gone to Saluces her to beholde.

¶ This Walter lowly, and full royally
Wedded hath with fortunate honestie
In gods peace: lyueth ful easely
At home, a outward grace ynough had he
And for he sawe that vnder lowe degre
Was honest vertue hid, the people him helde
A prudent man, and that is seene well selde.

¶ Not onely this Grisylde, through her wit
Couthe al the crafte of wyfely humblesse
But eke, whan the case required it
The comen profyte couthe she redresse
There nas discorde, rancour, ne heuinesse
In al the londe, that she ne couthe apese
And bring hem all wisely in rest and ese

Though her husbonde absent were or none
If gentilmen, or other of her contre
Were wrothe, she wolde bring hem at one
So wyse and ripe wordes had she
And iugement of so great equite
That fro heuen sent was, as men wende
People to saue, & euery wrong to amende.

¶ Not long tyme after this Grisylde
Was wedded, she a doughter had ybore
Al had she leuer haue borne a man chylde
Glad was ỳ Walter and his folke therfore
For though a mayde childe came al before
She may to a man childe attayne
By lykelyhode, sythens she is not barayne.

¶ Explicit pars secunda: Et
incipit pars tercia.

¶ There fel, as it befalleth oftetymes mo
Whan ỳ this child had sucked but a throwe
This Walter in his hert longed so
To tempt his wife, her sadnesse to knowe
That he ne myght out of his herte throwe
This marueylous desyre, his wife to assaye
Needelesse god wot, he thought her to affray

¶ He had assayed her ynoughe before
And fonde her euer good, what neded it
Her for to tempte & alway more and more
Though some man prayse it for a subtil vice
But as for me, I say ful euyll it syt
To assay a wife, when that it is no nede
And put her in anguysshe and in drede.

For which this markes wrought i this manere
He came alone a night there as she lay
With sterne face, and right vgly there
And sayd thus: Grisilde (quod he) that day
That I toke the out of thy poore aray
And put the in estate of hye noblesse
Thou hast not that forgoten, as I gesse

¶ I say Grisylde, the present dignite
In whiche I haue put the, as I trowe
Maketh not the forȝetful for to be
That I the toke in poore estate ful lowe
For any wele, thou must thy selfe knowe
Take hede of euery worde what I sey
There is no wight that hereth but we tweye

Thou wottest thy self, how ỳ thou came here
In to this house, it is not longe ago
And though to me thou be both lefe and dere
Vnto my gentyls thou art nothyng so
They saye, to hem it is great shame and wo
For to ben subiecte, and ben in seruage
To the, that borne art in so smale a village

¶ And namely syth thy doughter was ybore
These wordes haue they spoken douteles
But I desire, as I haue done before
To lyue my life with hem, in rest and pes
I may not in this case be recheles
I mote done with thy doughter, for the best
Not as I wolde, but as my gentyls lest

¶ And yet god wote this is ful loth to me
But natheles without thy wityng
I woll nought do, but thus I wol (quod he)
That thou to me assent, as in this thyng
Shewe nowe thy patience, in thy werkyng
That thou me hight and swore in our village
That day that maked was our mariage.

When she had heard al thys, she not amoued
Neither in worde, in chere, ne in countenaunce
For as it semed, she was not agreued
She sayd lorde, al lyeth in your plesaunce
My childe and I, with herte ly obeysaunce
Ben yours all, and ye may saue or spyll
Your owne, worketh your owne wil

¶ There may nothing, so god my soule saue
Lyking to you, that may displese me
Ne I desire nothyng for to haue
Ne dred for to lese, saue onely ye
This will is in my herte, and aye shal be
No length of tyme, or deth it may deface
Neither chage my corage into another place

¶ Glad was the Markes of her answering
But yet he fayned as he were not so
Ydrery was his chere, and his lokyng
When that he shulde out of the chambre go
Soone after this, a forlonge way or two
He priuely had tolde all his entent
Unto a man, and to his wyfe him sent.

In maner of a sergeant was this priuy mā
The whiche he faythfull oft founde had
In thinges great, & eke suche folke well can
Done execucion of thynges baddē
The lorde knew well, he him loued & dradde
And whē this sergeant wyste his lordes will
In to the chambre he stalked him ful styll.

¶ Madame he sayd, ye mote forgeue it me
Though I do thing, which I am cōstrayned
Ye be ful wise, and full well knowe ye
That lordes hestes may not be fayned
They may well be wayted and complayned
But men muste nedes unto her luste obey
And so wol I, there nys no more to sey.

¶ This childe I am cōmaunded to take
And spake no more, but vp the childe he hent
Dispitously, and gan a chere to make
As though he wold haue slayne it or he went
Grisylde must all suffer, and consent
And ēs a lambe, she sitteth meke and still
And let this cruel sergeant do his wyll.

¶ Suspect was the fame of this man
Suspecte his face, suspecte his worde also
Suspecte the tyme in whiche he this began
Alas her doughter, that she loued so
Yhe wende he wolde haue slayn it right tho
But natheles, she neither wept ne siked
Confirming her to that the Markes liked.

¶ But at the laste to speke she began
And meekely she the sergeant prayde
(So as he was a worthy gentell man)
That she might kysse her childe er ỳ it deyde
And in her barme, this litell childe she leyde
With ful sadde face, and gan the childe dresse
And lulled it, and after gan it kysse.

¶ And thus she sayd in her benigne voyce
Farwell my childe, I shall the neuer se
But sithē I haue marked the with ỳ croyce
Of thilke father yblyssed mote thou be
That for vs dyed vpon the roode tree
Thy soule litell childe, I him betake
For this night shall thou dyen for my sake.

¶ I trowe that to a norice in this caas
It had ben harde, this routhe for to se
Wel might a mother than crye alas
But natheless, so sadde and stedfast was she
That she endured all her aduersite
And to the sergeant meekely she sayde
Haue here ayen your litel yonge mayde

And goth now (qd she) & doth my lordes best
And o thing wold I pray you of your grace
But if my lorde forbyd it you at the lest
Burieth this litell body in some place
That no bestes ne birdes it to race
But he no word to that purpose woulde sayn
But tok the childe and went anon his way.

¶ This sergeaunt came to the lorde again
And of Grisildes wordes, and of her chere
He told him worde by worde, chorl & playne
And him presented with his doughter dere
Somwhat this lord had routhe in his manere
But natheless, his purpose held he styll
As lordes don, whē they wol haue her wyll.

¶ And badde the sergeaunt that full priuely
He shuld this child wel kept winde & wrappe
With all the circumstaunce tenderly
And carye it in a cofer, or in a lappe
But on payne of his heed of to swappe
That no man shulde knowe of his entent
Ne whence he came, ne whyther he went

¶ But at Bolayne, to his suster dere
That thilke tyme of Pauye was countesse
He shulde it take, and she we her this matere
Beseching her to done her busynesse
This childe to fostre in all gentelnesse
And whose childe ỳ it was, he bad her hyde
Frō euery wight, for ought ỳ might betyde

This sergēt goth, & hath fulfilled this thig
But to this Markes nowe retourne we

for

For nowe goeth he ful ofte imaginyng
If by his wiues chere, he might se
Or by her wordes, perceyue that she
Were chaunged, but he neuer coude fynde
But euer in one lyke sadde and kynde.

¶ As glad, as humble, as busy in seruage
And ese in loue, as she was wont to be
Was she to hym, in euery maner wyse
Ne of her doughter one worde spake she
None accident, for none aduersyte
was seene in her ne neuer, her doughters name
Nempned she, for ernest ne for game.
¶ Explicit tertia pars: Et incipit pars quarta.

¶ In this estate, passed ben foure yere
Er she with childe was, but as god wolde
A man childe she bare by this Walter
Ful gracious, and fayre to beholde
And when folke it to the father tolde
Not onely he, but all the countre merye
Was for the childe, & god they thonke & hery

Whenit was two yere olde, & from the brest
Departed from his norice on a day
This Markes cought yet another lest
To tempten his wife efte soones, if he may
Oned es was she tempted, I dare wel say
But wedded men ne conne no mesure
When they fynde a patient creature.

Wife (qd this Markes) ye haue herd or this
My people hewely beareth our mariage
And namely sythen my sonne borne is
Nowe is it worse than euer in our age
The murmure sleeth my herte & my corage
For to my eres cometh the voyce so smerte
That it wel nye distroyed hath my herte.

Nowe say they thus, when Walter is agone
Then shall the blode of Janicola succede
And ben our lorde, for other haue we none
Suche wordes say my people, it is no drede
Wel oughte I of suche murmure take hede
For certaynely I dred suche sentence
Though they not plainly speke in mine audience

¶ I wold lyue in peace, if that I might
Wherfore I am disposed vtterly
As I his suster serued by nyght
Right so I thinke to serue hym priuely
Thus warne I you, that ye not sodeynly
Out of your self, for no wo shulde outraye
Be the pacient, and therof I you praye.

¶ I haue (qd she) sayd, and euer shall
I wol ne nyl nothing certayne
But as you lyste: Nought greueth me at all
Though ỳ my doughter & my sone be slayne
At your comaundement: this is to sayne
I haue had no parte of childeren twayne
But first sickenesse, and after wo and payne.

Ye ben our lorde, doth ỳ your owne thing
Right as you list, and taketh no rede of me
For as I left at home my clothyng
When I came first to you, right so (qd she)
Left I my wyll, and all my liberte
And toke your clothing: wherfore I you praye
Do your wyll, I wolle to it obaye

¶ And certes, if I had prescience
Your will to knowe, er ye your lust me tolde
I wolde it done, without negligence
But now I wote your lust, & what ye wolde
All your pleasaunce, firme & stable I holde
For wist I that my deth wolde don you ese
Gladly wolde I suffer it you to plese

¶ Deth may make no comparisoun
Unto your loue: and when this Markes say
The constaūce of his wife, he caste adoun
His eyen two: and wondred howe she may
In suche pacience, suffereth all thys array
And forth he goeth, with dreery countenaūce
But to his herte, it was full great plesaūce

This eyger sergeaunt, in the same wise
That he her doughter caught, right so he
Or worse, if he coude worse deuyse
Hath hent her sonne, ỳ was ful of beaute
And euer in one so pacient was she
That she no chere made of heuinesse
But kisseth her child, and after gan him blisse

¶ Saue this she prayd him, if that he might
Her litel sonne he wouldē in erthe graue
His tender lymmes, delycate to sight
Fro foules and fro beestes to saue
But she none answere of hym might haue
He went his way, as he nothyng rought
But to Bolayne he tenderly it brought.

This Markes wondred euer lenger ỳ more
Upon her pacience, and yf that he

He had ſothely knowen there before
That parfytely her children loued ſhe
He wold haue wende, that for ſome ſubtelte
And of malyce, or cruel corage
That ſhe had ſuffred this with ſad vyſage

But he knewe wel, ỹ nexte him ſelfe certayne
She loued her children beſt, in euery wyſe
But nowe of women wold I aſke fayne
If theſe aſſayes myght not ſuffyſe
What couldе a ſturdy huſbonde more deuiſe
To preue her wyfehode, and her ſtedfaſtneſſe
But be contynuyng euer in ſturdineſſe.

¶ But there be folke of ſuche condicion
That whā they han a certayne purpoſe take
They couth not ſtynt of her entencyon
But as they were bounden to ỹ ſtake
They wol not of that purpoſe ſlake
Right ſo this Markes, hath fully purpoſed
To tempt his wyfe, as he was firſt diſpoſed

¶ He wayteth, if by wordes or countenaunce
She were to him chaunged of corage
But neuer could he fynde varyaunce
She was aye in one hert and vyſage
And euer the further that ſhe was in age
The more truer (if it were poſſyble)
She was to him in loue, and more penyble.

¶ For which it ſemeth thus, that of hem two
There nas but one wyl: for as Walter leſt
The ſame luſt was her pleſaunce alſo
And god be thonked, al fel for the beſt
She ſhewed wel, for no worldly vnreſt
A wyfe, as for her ſelfe, nothyng ſhulde
Wyllen in effecte, but as her huſbond wolde

The ſclaūder of Walter, wōder wyde ſpraad
That of cruel hert, ful wretchedly
(For he a pore woman wedded had)
Hath murdred both his children priuely
Which murmure was among hem comenly
No wonder was: for to the peoples ere
Ther cāe no word, but ỹ they murdred were

¶ For which, there as his people ther byfore
Had loued hi wel, diſclaūdred of his defame
Made hem, that they hated him therfore
To ben a murtherer is an hateful name
But natheleſſe, for erneſt ne for game
He of his cruel purpoſe wold not ſtent
To tempt his wyfe, was al his entent.

¶ Whā ỹ hys doughter. xii. yere was of age
He to the court of Rome, in ſubtel wyſe
(Enfourmed of his wyl) ſent his meſſage
Cōmaundyng hem, ſuche bulles to deuyſe
As to his cruel purpoſe may ſuffiſe
How that the pope, for his peoples reſte
Bad him wedde another, if that him leſte.

¶ I ſay he bad, they ſhuld counterfete
The popes bulle, makyng mencyon
That he hath leue, his firſt wife to lete
As by the popes diſpenſacyon
To ſtynte rancoure and diſcencion
Betwirt his people & him, thus ſpake ỹ bull
The whiche they han publiſhed at the full.

¶ The rude people, as no wonder nys
Weenden ful wel, it had ben right ſo
But whan theſe tydinges come to Griſyldis
I deme, that her hert was full wo
But ſhe was lyche ſadde euermo
Diſpoſed was this humble creature
The aduerſyte of fortune to endure

¶ Abydyng euer his luſte and his pleſaunce
To whom ſhe was yeuen, hert and all
As to her worldly ſuffiſaunce
But certaynly, if I this ſtory tel ſhall
This Markes writen hath in ſpeciall
A letter, in which he ſhewed his entent
And priuely, he it to Bologne ſent.

¶ To the erle of Pauy, which that had tho
Wedded his ſuſter: he prayde ſpecially
To bringen him ayen his children two
In honorable eſtate al openly
But one thyng he him prayde al vtterly
That he to no wyght, thouz men wold enquere
Should tellen whoſe children they were

¶ But ſay ỹ the mayden ſhulde wedded be
Vnto the Markes of Saluce anone
And as the erle was prayde, ſo dyd he
For at a day yſet, he on his way is gone
Toward Saluce, & lordes many one
In ryche aray, this mayden for to gyde
Her yong brother ridyng by her ſyde

¶ Arayed was toward her marriage
This maiden freſhe, ful of genunes clere
And her brother, that ſixten yere was of age
Arayed was eke freſhely in his manere
And thus in great nobleſſe and glad chere

Towarde Salues, shapen her iourney
Fro day to day, ridyng forth her way.

Explicit quarta pars: Et sequitur pars quinta.

Among al this, after his wicked vsage
This Walkes his wife yet to tempten more
(To the betterest profit of her corage
Fully to haue experience and lore
If that she were as stedfast as before)
He on a day in open audyence
Ful boystously hath said her this sentence.

Certes Griseld, I had inough of plesaunce
To han you to my wyfe, for your goodnesse
And for your trouth, and your obeysaunce
Not for your lynage, ne for your richesse
But I now know in very sothfastnesse
That in great lordshyp, if I me wel auise
There is great seruitude in sondry wyse.

I may not done, as euery ploughman may
My people me constrayneth for to take
Another wife, and crien day by day
And eke the pope, this rancoure for to slake
Consenteth it, that dare I vndertake
And truely, thus much I wol you say
My new wife is comyng by the way.

Be stronge of hert, and voyde anon her place
And thilke dowery that ye brought to me
Take it ayen, I graunt it of my grace
Returneth to your fathers house (quod he)
No man may alway haue prosperite
With euen hert, I rede you to endure
The strok of fortune, or of auenture.

And she ayen answerd in patience:
My lord (quod she) I wote and wyste alway
How that betwyxt your magnificence
And my pouerte, no man can ne may
Maken no comparyson, it is no nay
I helde me neuer digne in no manere
To ben your wyfe, ne yet your chamberere

And in this house, there ye me lady made
(The hie god take I, as for my witnesse
And al so wysely, as he my soule glad)
I helde me neyther lady ne maystresse
But humble seruaunt to your worthynesse
And euer shal, whyle my lyfe may endure
Aboven euery worldly creature

That ye so long of your benignite
Haue holde me in honour and nobley
(Where I was not worthy for to be)
That thonke I god & you, to whom I prey
So yelde it you, there is no more to sey
Vnto my father gladly wol I wende
And with him dwel to my lyues ende

There I was fostred of a childe ful smal
Til I be deed, my wille there wol I fulfille
My widowe clene in herte, body and al
For sythen I yaue to you my maydenhede
And am your trewe wife, it is no drede
God shylde suche a lordes wyfe to take
Another man, to husbonde or to make.

And of your newe wife, god of his grace
So graunt you welth and hight prosperite
For I wol gladly yelde her my place
In which I was blyssful wont to be
For sythen it lyketh you my lord (quod she)
(That whylom weren all my ioyes welle)
That I shal gon: I shal go when you lyke.

But there as ye me profred such dowary
As I first brought, it is wel in my minde
It were my wrecched clothes, nothing hary
The which to me were now ful hard to fynde
Ah, good god how gentil and how kynde
Ye semed by your speche and your vysage
The day that maked was our mariage.

But sothe is said, algate I fynde it trewe
For in effecte it is proued now on me
Loue is not olde, as whan it is newe
For certes lorde, for now aduersyte
To dyen in this caas, it shal nought be
That euer in word or werke I shall repent
That I you yaue myn hert in good entent

My lorde ye wote, that in my fathers place
Ye dyd me strippe out of my poore wede
And richely ye clad me of your grace
To you brought I naught els out of drede
But feyth, nakednesse, and maydenhede
And here ayen your clothyng I restore
And eke my wedding ringe for euermore

The remnaunt of your iewels redy be
Within your chambre, dare I safely sayne
Naked out of my fathers house (quod she)
I came: and naked I moste turne ayayne
Al your pleasaunce wold I folow fayne

But

But yet I hope it be not youre entent
That I smockeles out of youre paleys went.

Ye coulde not do so dishoneste a thyng
That ilke wombe, in whiche youre childre lay
Shulde before the people, in my walking
Be sene al bare: wherfore I you pray
Let me not lyke a worme go by the way
Remembreth you myn owne lord so dere
I was your wife, though I unworthy were

Wherfore in rewarde of my maydenhede
Which I to you brought, & not ayen bere
As vouchesafe to yeue me to my mede
But such a smocke as I was wont to were
That I therwith may wrye ꝑ wombe of here
That was your wife: & here I take my leue
Of you, myne owne lorde, lest I you greue.

The smocke (qd he) that ꝑ hast on thy backe
Late be thyl, and bere it forth with the
But wel beware that nought be spoke
But went his way, for routhe and pyte
Before the folke her selfe stryped she
And in her smocke, with foote & heed all bare
Toward her fathers house forth is she fare

The folke folowed wepyng in her trey
And fortune ever they cursed as they gone
But she fro wepyng kept her eyen drey
Ne in this time, word spake she none
Her father, that this tidynges herde anone
Curssed the day and tyme, that nature
Shope him to bene a lyues creature.

For out of doute, this olde poure man
Was ever in suspecte of her marriage
For ever he demed, sythen it began
That whan the lorde fulfilled had his corage
Him thold thinke it was a disparage
To his estate, so lowe for to alyght
And doydem her, as soone as ever he might.

Unto his doughter hastely goth he
(For he by ꝑ noyse of folke knew her comyng)
And with her olde cote, as it might be
Ye couered her, ful fast wepyng
But on her body might he it not bring
For rude was the cloth, & she more of age
By dayes fele than was her marriage.

Thus with her father, for a certayne space
Dwelleth this flour of wifely pacience
That neuer by her wordes, nor by her face
Before the folke, ne elles in absence
Ne shewed she, that her was done offence
Ne of her hye estate no remembraunce
Ne had she, as by her countenaunce.

No wonder is, for in her great estate
Her gost was ever in playne humilyte
No tender mouth, ne hert delycate
Ne pompe, ne semblaunce of royalte
But ful of pacyence and benygnite
Discrete, and prudente, and ay honorable
And to her husbande ever meke and stable.

Men speke of Job, & most of his bnignite
As clerkes whan hem lyst can wel endyte
Namely of men but in sothfastnesse
Though clerkes praise women but a lyte
There can no man in humblesse hem aquite
As women can nor be half so true
As women ben, but it befall of newe.

Explicit quinta pars: et sequitur pars sexta.

Fro Bolayne is the Erle of Pavn come
Of whiche the fame sprange to moche a prise
And to the peoples eeres, al and some
Was couthe eke, how a newe Marquesse
He with him brought, in pompe & ryche ryotte
That was ever ferre with mannes eye
So noble aray, in west Lumbardye.

The Barkes, that shope & knewe al this
Er ye this Erle was come, sent his message
To this like people and feir Griseldis
And the wyfe humble here, & glad of visage
Not with thestyng here in her corage
Came at his bode, & on her knees her sette
And reuerently and wysely she him grette.

Griselde (qd he) my will is utterly
This mayde, that wedded shal be vnto me
Ycrowned be to morowe al so royally
As it is possyble in my house to be
And eke that every wyght in his degre
Have his estate in servyng and seruyse
And also pleasaunt, as ye can best deuyse.

I have no woman sufficient certayne
The chambres for to aray in ordynaunce
After my lust, and therfore wold I fayne
That thyn were all such gouernaunce

Thou knowest eke of olde al my pleasaunce
Though thyne aray be bad, and yuel besey
Do thou thy deuer at the leest wey.

¶ Not onely lorde that I am glade (qd she)
To done your lust, but I desyre also
You for to please, and trewe in my degre
Withouten fayntyng, and shal euer mo
Ne neuer for no wele, ne for no wo
Ne shal the gost within my hert stent
To loue you best, with al my trewe entent

And with ỳ word, she gan the house to dight
And tables to set, and beddes to make
And payned her to done al that she myght
Prayeng the chamberers for gods sake
To haste hem, and fast swepe and shake
And she the most seruysable of hem all
Hath euery chambre arayed, and his hall.

¶ Aboute vndren gan this erle alyght
That with hi brought these noble children twey
For which the people ran to se that syght
Of her aray, so ryche ly besey
And than at erste amonges hem they sey
That Walter was no foole, though him lest
To chaunge his wife: for it was for the best

¶ For she is fayrer, as they demen all
Than is Grisylde, and more tender of age
And fayrer frute bytwene hem shall fall
And more pleasaunce, for her hye lynage
Her brother eke, so fayre was of his age
That hi to seen ỳ people had cauzt pleasáce
Cómending now the Markes gouernaunce.

¶ O sterne people, vnsad and vntrewe
Aye vndiscrete, and chaungyng as a fane
Delityng euer in rumer that is newe
For lyke the moone euer waxe ye & wane
Euer ful of clappyng, dere ynough a lane
your dome is false, your cõstaũce yuel preueth
A ful greate foole is he that on you leueth

¶ Thus sayden sad folke in that cyte
Whan that the people gased vp and doun
For they were glad, right with the nouelte
To haue a newe lady of her toun
No more of this make I now mencioun
But to Grisylde agen wol I me dresse
And tellen her constaunce, and her busynesse.

¶ Wel busy was Grisylde on euery thyng
That to the fest was appertinent
Right nauzt was she abashed of her clothing
Though they were rude, & somwhat to rent
But with glad chere, to the yate is went
With other folke, to greten the Marquesse
And after doth she forth her busynesse

With right glad chere, ỳ gestes she receiueth
And buxomly, eueriche in his degre
That no man defaute there perceyueth
But euer they wondren, what she might be
That in so pore aray was for to se
And could such honour, and reuerence
And worthyly they praysen her prudence.

¶ In all the meane while she ne stente
This mayden & eke her brother to cõmende
With al her hert, and busyngue entente
So wel, that no man could her prise amende
But at the last, whan these lordes wende
To sytten adown to meate, he gan to call
Grisylde, as she was busy in the hall.

¶ Grisylde (qd he) as it were in his play
Howe lyketh the my wyfe, and her beaute
Right wel my lorde (qd she) for in good fay
A fayrer sawe I neuer none than she
I pray to god so yeue you prosperite
And so hope I, that he wol to you sende
Plesaunce ynough, vnto your lyues ende

¶ But one thing I beseche, & warne also
That ye prieke with no turmentyng
This tender mayden, as ye han do mo
For she is fostred in her norisshyng
More tenderly, in my supposyng
She could not aduersite endure
As could a pore fostred creature.

¶ And whan this Walter sawe her pacience
Her glad chere, and no malyce at all
And he so ofte hath done her offence
And she aye constant, and stable as a wall
Continuing euer her innocence ouer all
This sturdy Markes, gan his hert dresse
To rewe upon her wyfely stedfastnesse.

¶ This is ynough, Grisylde myne (qd he)
Be no more agast, ne yuell apayde
I haue thy fayth, and thy benignite
As well as euer woman was assayde
In great estate, or pore ly arayde
Now know I dere wyfe thy stedfastnesse

And

And her in armes toke, and gan to kesse.

¶ And she for wonder, toke therof no kepe
She herde not what thing he to her sayde
She fared as she had sterte out of her slepe
Tyll she out of her madenesse abrayde
Griselde (qd he) by god that for vs deyde
Thou art my wyfe, and none other I haue
Ne neuer had, as god my soule saue

This is thy doughter, which ꝑ hast supposed
To ben my wife, and none other feythfully
And this shall bē min heyr, as I haue dispo-
Thou bare hem in thy body truly (sed
At Bologne haue I kept hem sykerly
Take hem ayen, for now mayst thou not say
That ꝑ hast lorne any of thy childrē tway.

¶ And folke, that other wyse han sayd of me
I warne hem wel, ꝑ I haue done this dede
For no malyce, ne for no cruelte
But for to assay in the thy womanhede
And not for to sley my children, god forbede
But for to kepen hem priuely and styll
Tyl I thy purpose knewe, and all thy wyll

whā she this herd, a swoune down she falleth
For pitous ioy, and after her swouning
She both her yong children to her calleth
And in her armes, pitously wepyng
Embraced hem bothe, tenderly kyssyng
Ful lyke a mother, with her salte teres
She bathed both her vysage and her heres

¶ O which a pytous thyng it was to se
Her swouning, and her pytous voyce to here
Graūt mercy lorde, god thōke it you (qd she)
That ye haue saued me my children dere
Now recke I neuer to be dede right here
Sythen I stōd in your loue, and in your grace
No force of deth, ne whan my spirite pace.

¶ O tendre, O dere, O yong children myne
Your woful mother wende stedfastly
That cruel houndes, or some foule vermyne
Had eten you, but god of his mercy
And your benigne father, so tenderly
Hathe done you kepe: and in that same stounde
All sodaynly she swapte down to the grounde.

¶ And in her swouning, so sadly holdeth she
Her childrē two, whan she gan hem embrace
That with great sleyght and dyfficulte
The childrē from her armes they gan to race
O many a tere, on many a pytouse face
Down ran, of hem that stoden there besyde
Vnneth aboute her myght no man abyde.

¶ Walter her gladdeth, and her sorow slaketh
She ryseth vp all abashed from her traunce
And euery wight her ioy and feest maketh
Til she hath caught ayen her estaty naunce
Walter her doth so faythfully plesaunce
That it was deynte to seen the chere
Betwyxt hem two, whā they were met ifere

¶ These ladyes, whan they her tyme sey
Han taken her, and into chaumbre gon
And stryppen her out of her rude arrey
And in a clothe of gold, that bryght shone
With a crowne of many a riche stone
Vpon her heed, they her in to hall brought:
And there she was honoured as she ought.

¶ Thus hath this pytous day a blisful ende
For euery man and woman doth his might
This day in myrth and reuel to dispende
Tyl on the welken shone the sterres bryght
For more solempne, in euery mannes syght
This feest was, and greater of costage
Than was the reuel of her mariage.

¶ Ful many a yere, in hye prosperite
Lyuen these two, in concorde and in rest
And richely his doughter maried he
Vnto a lorde, one of the worthyest
Of al Italye, and than in peace and rest
His wyues father in his courte he kepte
Tyl that his soule out of his body crepte.

¶ His sonne succedeth in his heritage
In rest and peace, after his fatheres day
And fortunate was eke in marriage
All put he not his wyfe in great assay
This worldis not so strong, it is no nay
As it hath ben in olde tymes yore
And herknerh what thautour sayth therfore.

THis story is said, not for ꝑ wyues shold
Folowen Grisylde, as in humylite
For it were inportable tho they wold
But that euery wight in his degre
Shulde be constaunt, in al aduersite
As was Grisild, wherfore Petrarke writeth
This storie, which with hye style he endyteth

¶ For sith a woman was so patient
Unto a mortall man, well more we ought
Receyue al in gree that god vs sent
For great skyll he preueth that he wrought
But he ne tempteth no man that he bought
As saith saint Jame, if ye his pystell rede
He preueth folke but a day, it is no drede

¶ And suffreth vs as for our exercyse
With sharpe scourges of aduersite
Ful ofte to be beaten, in sondrie wyse
Not for to knowe our wyl, for certes he
Or we were borne, knewe al our frelte
And for our best, is al his gouernaunce
Let vs lyue than in vertuous suffraunce

But one word herkeneth lordynges or ye go
It were ful harde to fynde nowe a dayes
In al a countre Grisyldes thre or two
For if they were put to suche assayes
The gold of hem hath so bad a layes
With brasse, for thoughe it be fayre at eye
It wolde rather brast a two than plye

¶ For which here, for ỳ wiues loue of Bathe
Whose life and sceptre, mighty god mayntene
In heygh maistry, or els were it skathe
I wyl with lusty hert, freshe and grene
Say you a song, to glad you I wene
And let vs fynne of ernest matere
Herkeneth my song, ỳ saith in this manere.

¶ Lenuoye de Chaucer a les
maris de nostre temps

Grysylde is deed, and eke her
patience
And bothe at ones buryed in
Italye
For which I crye in open au-
dience
No wedded man be so hardy to assayle
His wyues patience, in trust to fynde
Grisyldes, for in certayne he shal fayle.

¶ O noble wyues, ful of hye prudence
Let no humilite your tonge nayle
Ne let no clerke haue cause ne diligence
To write of you a storie of suche mervayle
As of Grisylde, patient and kynde
Lest Chechifface swalow you in her entrayle

¶ Foloweth Ecco, that holdeth no sylence

But euer answereth at the countre tayle
Beth not adasked for your innocence
But sharpely taketh on you the gouernayle
Enprinteth wel this lesson in your mynde
For cõmen profyte, sythnesse it may auayle

¶ Ne dredeth hemnot, doth hem no reuerence
For though thin husbãde armed be in mayle
The arrowes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest, and eke his aduentayle
In ielousye eke, loke thou him bynde
And ỳ shal make him couch as doth a quayle

¶ If õ be fayre, there folke ben in presence
Shewe thou thy visage, & thyn apparayle
If thou be foule, be fre of thy dispence
To get thy frendes aye do thy trauayle
Be aye of chere, as lyght as lefe on lynde
And let him care, wepe, wringe, and wayle.

¶ Ye archwiues, stõdeth aye at your defence
Syth ye be strong, as is a great camayle
Ne suffreth not, that men do you offence
And ye sklendre wyues, feble as in batayle
Beth cygre as any tygre is in Inde
Ye clapperth as a mylle, I you counsayle.

¶ Here endeth ỳ clerkes tale of Or-
forde, and here folowyth the
wordes of our host.

This worthy clerk, whã ended was his tale
Our host sayd & swore by cockes bones
Me were leuer than a barel of ale
My wife at home had herd this legẽde ones
This is a gentle tale for the nones
As to my purpose, wyste ye my wyll
But thing that wol not be, let it be styll.

¶ Here endeth the wordes of our hoste,
and here folowethe the Fran-
keleyns prologue.

These olde gentyll britons in
her dayes
Of dyuers auentures made
layes
Rymed fyrste in her mother
tonge
Whiche layes, wh her instrumentes they song
Or els reden hem for her plesaunce
And one of hem haue I in remembraunce
Whiche I shal say, as wyllyng as I can.

But

But sirs, bicause I am a boȝel man
At my begynnyng first I you beseche
Haue me excused of my rude speche
I lerned neuer rhetoȝike certayne
Thing ꝑ I speke, mote be bare and playne
I slept neuer on the mounte of Pernaso
Ne lerned neuer Marcus Tullius Cicero
Coloures ne know I none, withouten drede
But suche coloures as growen in the mede
Oȝ els suche as men dyen oȝ paynte
Coloures of rhetoȝike, ben to me quaynte
My spirite feleth not of suche matere
This is my tale, if ye wol it here.

Here endeth the Frankeleyns ꝓlogue.

Here begynneth the Frankeleyns tale.

IN Armoȝike, that called is Britayne
There was a knighte, ꝑ loued & did hys payne
To serue ladyes in hys best wyse
And many a labour, and many a great empꝛise
He for his lady wꝛought, er she were wonne
For she was one the fayꝛest vnder sonne
And eke therto comen of hye kynrede
That wel vnneth durst this knight for drede
Telher his wo, his payne, and his distresse
But at the laste, she of her woꝛthynesse
And namely for his meke obeysaunce
Hath suche a pyte caught of his penaunce
That pꝛiuely she fyll of his acoꝛde
To take him for her husbonde and her loꝛde
Of such loꝛdship, as mē haue ouer her wiues
And for to lede in the moꝛe blysse her lyues
Of his fre wyl, he swoꝛe her as a knyght
That neuer in al his lyfe, day ne nyght
Ne shuld he take vpon him no maistry
Agayne her wyl, ne kythe her ielousy
But her obey, and folowe her wyl in all
As any louer to his lady shall
Saue that the name of soueraynte
That wold he haue, for shame of his degre.
She thōked him, & with ful great humblesse
She said: sir, sythe of your gentylnesse
Ye pꝛofred me to haue so large a rayne
Ne wold god neuer betwixt vs twayne
As in my gylte, were eyther werre oȝ stryfe
Sir, I wol be your trewe humble wife
Haue here my trueth, tyl that my hert breste
Thus ben they bothe in quiet and in reste.
For one thing sirs, safely dare I seyne
That frendes, euery che other must obeyne
If they wol longe holden compaynye
Loue wol not be constrayned by maistrye
When maistry cometh, the god of loue anon
Beateth his wynges, and farewell he is gon
Loue is a thinge, as any spirite free
Women of kynde desiren liberte
And not to be constrayned as a thrall
And so done men, if I sothe saye shall
Loke who that moste patient is in loue
He is at his auauntage all aboue
Pacience is an hye vertue certayne
For it venquisheth, as these clerkes sayne
Thynges that rygour shall neuer attayne
For euery word, mē may not chyde oȝ playne
Lerneth to suffer, oȝ els, so mote I gone
Ye shall it lerne whether ye woll oȝ none
For in this world certayne, no wight ther is
That he ne doth oȝ sayeth sometyme a mis
Ire, sickenesse, oȝ constellacion
Wyne, wo, oȝ chaungyng of complexion
Causeth ful ofte, to don a mysse oȝ spoken
On euery wrong, a man may not be wreken
After the tyme, must be temperaunce
To euery wight that can of gouernaunce
And therfore, hath this worthye wise knight
To lyue in ease, suffraunce her hight
And she to him ful wysely gan swere
That neuer shoulde ther be default in here
Here may men se, humble and wise accoꝛde
Thus hath she take her seruaunt & her loꝛde
Seruaunte in loue, and loꝛde in mariage
Than was he bothe in loꝛdship and seruage
Seruage? nay, but in loꝛdeship aboue
Sithen he hath bothe his lady and hys loue
His lady certes, and hys wyfe also
The whiche that lawe of loue accoꝛdeth to
And when he was in thys pꝛosperite
Home with his wife he goth, into his contre
Nat fer fro Dēmarke, ther his dwellig was
Where as he lyueth in ioye and solas
Who coude tell, but he had wedded be
The ioy, the ease, and the pꝛosperyte
That is betwixt an husbonde & his wife
Euermore lasted thys blysfull lyfe
Til that this knight, of which I speke thus
That of Carre Juda, was cleped Arueragus
Shope him to dwel a yere oȝ twayne
In Englond, that cleped was Britayne

To seken in armes worshyp and honour
For all his luste he sette in suche labour
And dwelt ther two yere, the boke saith thus
¶ Nowe woll I stynt of thys Arueragus
And speke I woll of Dorigen his wyfe
That loueth her husbonde as her herres life
For his absence, wepeth she and syketh
As don these noble wyues when hem lyketh
She mourneth, wayleth, fasteth, & playneth
Desire of his presence, her so constrayneth
That al thys wyde worlde set she at nought
Her frendes, which knewe her heuy thought
Confoiten her, in all that euer they may
They preachē her, and tellen her night & day
That causeles she slewe her selfe, alas
And euery comfort possible in this caas
They don to her, with all her busynesse
And al for to maken her leue her heuynesse.
¶ By processe, as ye knowen euerychone
Men mowen so longe grauen in a stone
Tyll some figure therin ymyned be
So longe han they comforted her, tyll she
Receyued hath by hope and by reson
The emprintyng of her condicion
Through which her gret sorow gan aswage
She may not alway endure suche a rage
And eke Arueragus in all thys care
Hath sent his letters home of his welfare
And that he woll come hastely agayne
Or els had this sorowe her herte slayne.
Her frendes saw her sorowe gan to slake
And prayden her on knees, for goddes sake
To come and romen in her company
Away to dryuen her derke fantasye
And fynally she graunted that requeste
For wel she sawe it was for the beste
¶ Nowe stode her castell faste by the see
And often with her frendes walked she
Her to disport on the bankes hye
Where as she may shyppes & barges sye
Sayling her course, where hem lyste go
But yet was that a parell of her wo
For to her selfe full oft alas sayde she
Is there no shyppe, of so many as I se
Wol bring home my lorde, than were my herte
Warisshed of these bitter paynes smerte.
¶ Another tyme, wolde she sitte and thynke
And cast her eyen downwarde fro the brynke
But when she sawe the grysly rockes blake
For very feare, so wolde her herte quake
That on her fete she might not her susteene
Than wolde she sit adowne vpon the greene
And pytously in to the see beholde
And say right thus, with sorouful sikes colde
¶ Eterne god, that through thy purueyaūce
Ledest this world, by certeyne gouernaunce
In ydle as mē sayn, dost thou nothing make
But lorde, these grysly fendely rockes blake
That semen rather a foule confusion
Of werke, than a fayre creacion
Of suche a parfite god, wyse and full stable
why haue ye wrought this werk unreasonable
For by this werke, north, south, west, ne est
Ther nys fostred, man, bryde, ne beste
It doth no good, but anoyeth
Se ye not lorde, how mākinde it distroyeth
An hūdred thousande bodies of mankynde
Haue rockes slayn, al be they not in mynde
Sin mankind is so faire a part of thy werke
That thou it madest lyke thy owne werke
Than semed it ye had a great charte
Towarde mākynde, but how thē may it be
That ye suche menes maken it to dystroyen
Which menes don no good, but euer anoyen.
I wote wel clerkes woll sayne as hem lest
By argumentes, that al is for the best
Though I ne can not the causes wel knowe
But thylke god, ỳ made the wynde to blowe
As kepe my lorde, this is my conclusion
To clerkes lette I all this disputacion
And wolde god that all these rockes blake
Were sonken in to hell for his sake.
These rockes slee myn heart for feare
Thus wold she say with many a pitous teare
Her frendes sawe it was for her no disport
To romen by the see, but discomfort
And shapen hem to playn somwhere elles
They leden her by ryuers and by welles
And eke in other places delectables
They daunsen & they playen at the tables
So on a day, right in the morowe tyde
Unto a gardayne, that was there besyde
In which that they had made her ordinaūce
Of vitayles, and other purueyaunce
They gon and playn hem al the longe day
And this was in the sixte morowe of May
Which may hath painted with his soft shoures
This gardayne ful of leues and of flowres
And craft of mannes honde so curiously
Arayed had this gardayne truely
That neuer nas there garden of suche pryse
But yf it were the very paradyse
The odour of flowres, and the freshe sight
Wolde haue made any herte light
That euer was born, but if to gret sickenes
Or to great sorowe helde it in distresse

So

So was it full of beaute, with pleasaunce.
And after dinner gonne they daunce
And syngen also, saue Dorigene alone
That yet vnto her selfe made her mone
For she ne sey hym on the daunce go
That was her husbonde, and her loue also
But natheless, she must her tyme abyde
And with good hope, let her sorowe slyde.
¶ Upon this daunce, amonge other men
Daunced a squier before Dorigen
That freshest was, and iolyer of aray
As to my doome, therin is the moneth of May
He singeth, & daunceth, passing euery man
That is or was, sithen the worlde began
And therwithall, & men shulde him discryue
One of the best farynge men on lyue
Yonge, stronge, vertuous, ryche, and wyse
And wel beloued, and holden of great pryse
And shortely, if I the sothe tell shall
Unwitting of thys Dorigen at all
This lusty squier, seruaunt to Venus
Whiche yeleped was Aurelyus
Had loued her beste of any creature
Two yere and more, as was his auenture
But neuer durst he tell her thys greuaunce
Without coppe he dronke al his penaunce
He was dispayred, nothing durst he say
Saue in his songes, somwhat wold he wray
His wo, as in generall complayning
He sayd he loued, and was beloued nothing
Of whiche matere made he many layes
Songes, complayntes, roundels, virelayes
How that he durst not his sorowe tell
But languyshe, as doothe a fury in hel
And dye he muste he sayd as dyd Ecco
For Narcisus, that durst not tell hys wo.
¶ In other maner than ye herde me say
He durst not he to her his wo bewray
Saue parauenture somtyme at daunces
There yonge folke kepen her obseruaunces
It may well be, he loked on her face
In suche a wyse, as men that asken grace
But nothyng wiste she of his entent
Natheless it happed, er they thence went
Bycause that he was her neighbour
And was a man of worshyp and honour
And had knowen him oft tymes yore
They fell in speche, and so forth more & more
Unto his purpose than drowe Aurelius
And when he sawe his tyme he sayd thus.
Madame (qd he) by god yt this world made
So that I wyst, yt I might your hert glade
I wolde that day, that your Arueragus
Went ouer the see, that I Aurelyus
Had went ther yt I should neuer come againe
For wel I wote my seruice is in vayne
My guerdon ris but brestyng of myn hert
Madame reweth vpon my payne smert
For with one worde ye may me slee or saue
Here at your fote god wolde yt I were graue
I ne haue as nowe no leysar more to sey
Haue mercy swete, or ye wol do me dey.
¶ She gan to loke vpon Aurelyus
Is this your wyl (qd she) and say ye thus
Neuer erst (qd she) ne wist I what ye ment
But nowe I knowe Aurelyus your entent
By thilke god, that yaue me soule and lyfe
Ne shal I neuer be vntrewe wyfe
In word ne in werke, as far as I haue wyt
I wol ben hys to whom I am knyt
Take this for a fynall answere of me
But after this in playe thus sayd she.
¶ Aurelyus (qd she) by god aboue
yet wol I graunte you to ben your loue
(Sithen I se you so pytously complayne)
Loke what day that endelong Britayne
Ye remeue all the rockes, stone by stone
That they ne let shyppe ne bote to gone
I say whe ye haue made these costes so clene
Of rockes, that there nis no stone yseene
Than wol I loue you best of any man
Here haue my trueth, in al that euer I can.
Is there none other grace in you (qd he)
¶ No by that lorde (qd she) that maked me
For wel I wote that it shall neuer betyde
Lete suche folye out of your hert glyde
What deyntie shulde a man haue in his lyfe
For to go loue another mannes wyfe.
That hath her body when so that him lyketh
¶ Aurelyus full oft sore syketh
Wo was Aurely, whan he thys herde
And with a sorouful chere he thus answerde
¶ Madame (qd he) thys were impossible
Than mote I dye on sodeyne dethe horrible
And with that worde he turned hym anone.
¶ Tho come her other frendes euerychone
And in the aleyes romeden vp and doun
And nothyng wyste of thys conclusion
But sodaynly began to trucll newe
Tyll that the bright sonne lost his hewe
For the orizont hath reft the sonne his lyght
This is as muche to say, as it was nyght
And home they gon in ioy and in solas
Saue onely wretched Aurelyus, alas
He to his house is gon with sorowfull harte
He sayd he might not from his dethe asterte

Dum

Him semed, that he felte his herte colde
Up to beuen his hondes gan he holde
And on his knees barr, he set him adoun
And in his rauyng said this orisoun
For very wo out of his witte he brayde
He nyst what he spake, but thus he sayde
With pitous herte hath his complaint begonne
Unto the goddes, and first vnto the sonne
He said: god Apollo and gouernour
Of euery plante, herbe, tree, and flour
That yeuest after thy declinacion
To ilke of hem his time and ceson
As thyn herberow chaungeth low and hye
Lorde Phebus, cast thy mercyable eye
On wretched Arueyus, which am but lorne
Lo lorde, my lady hath my deth ysworne
Without gylt, but thy benignyte
Upon my deedly herte haue some pite
For wel I wot lorde Phebus, if ye lyste
Ye may me helpe saue my lady beste
Now vouche ye saue, that I you deuyse
How that I maye be holpen and in what wyse.
Your blysful suster Lucina the shene
That of the see is goddesse and quene
Though Neptunus hath deitee in the see
Yet empryse abouen hunts she
Ye knowen wel lorde, right as her desyre
Is to be quyked and lyghted of your fyre
For which she folweth you full besily
Right so the see desyreth naturally
To folowen her that is goddesse
Both of the see, and ryuers more and lesse
Wherfore lorde Phebus, this is my request
Do this miracle, or do myne herte brest
That now next at this opposicion
Which in sygne shal be the lyon
As prayeth her so great a flodde to bryng
That fyue fadome at the leste, it ouer spryng
The hyghest rocke in Armorike Bretayne
And let this flodde dure yeres twayne
That erres to my lady may I say
Holdeth your hest, the rockes ben away
This thing may ye lyghtly don for me
Prayeth her to gon no faster course than ye
I say thus, prayeth your suster that she go
No faster course than ye in yeres two
Than shal she be at the ful alway
And spring flodde lastyng both nyght and day
And but she vouchsafe in suche manere
To graunte me my souerayne lady dere
Pray her to synken euery rocke adoun
Into her owne derke regioun
Under the ground, there Pluto dwelleth in
Or neuer more shall I my lady win
Thy temple in Delphos, wel I barfote se
O lorde Phebus, se the teares on my cheke
And on my payne haue some compassion
And with that word, in swoune he fel adoun
And longe tyme he lay in a traunce.
His brother, which that knewe of his penaunce
Up caught hym, and to bed hym brought
Dispeyred in this turment and this thought
Lette I this woful creature lye
Chese he whether he wol lyue or dye.
Arueragus with heale and greate honour
(As he that was of chyualry the flour)
Is comen home, and other worthy men
O blysful art thou now Dorigen
That hast thy lusty husbonde in thyn armes
The freshe knight, the worthy man of armes
That loueth the, as his owen herte lyfe
Nothing lyste him to be imaginatyfe
If any wight had spoken, while he was out
To hye of loue, ther of had he no dout
He nyste how that his felawe gan pleye
But daunced, iusted, and made hir good cheye
And thus in ioy and blysse I let hem dwell
And of wofull Arueyus wol I tell.
In langour and in turmente dispitous
Two yere and more lay wretched Arueyus
Er any foote on erthe he might gone
Ne comfort in this tyme had he none
Saue of his brother, which was a clerke
He knewe of all this wo and all this werke
For to non other creature certayn
Of this matere, durst he no worde sayn
Under his brest he bare it more secre
Than euer did Pamphilus for Galathe
His brest was hole without for to seen
But in his herte ay, was the arowe keen
And wel ye knowen that of a surgeyne
In surgery, is perylous the cure
But men might touch the arowe or come therby
His brother wepeth and waylyth priuely
Til at the last him fel in remembraunce
That while he was at Orliaunce in Fraunce
(As these clerkes vonge that ben lyberall)
Ther ben atte ten that ben curious
Seken in euery halke and in euery herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne
He him remembred that vpon a day
At Orliaunce in studye a boke he sey
Of magike naturel, which his felawe
That was in that tyme a bacheler of lawe
Al were he there to lerne another craft
Had priuely vpon his bedde ylaft

accepte

Whiche boke spake of mochell operacions
Touching the foure & twenty mansions
That longen to the moone, and suche folye
As in our dayes is not worthe a flye
For holy churche sayth in our byleue
We suffren non illusion vs to greue
And whē this boke was in hys remēbraūce
Anon for ioye his herte gan daunce
And to him selfe he sayd pryuely
My brother shal be warisshed sykerly
For I am syker that there be sciences
By whiche men maken diuers aparences
Suche as these subtell tregetors play
For ofte at festes haue I well herde say
That tregetors, within an hall large
Haue made come in water and a barge
And in the hall rowen vp and doun
Somtyme hath semed a grym lyon
And somtyme flowres spring as in a mede
Somtyme a vyne, and grapes white & rede
Somtyme a castell of lyme and stone
And when hem lyked, vanysshed hem anon
Thus semed it to euery mannes syght.
Nowe then conclude I thus, if ỳ I myght
At Orliaunce some olde felawe fynde
That had this moones mansions in mynde
Or other magyke naturall aboue
He shuld wel make my brother haue his loue
For with an apparaunce a clerke may make
To mannes syght, that all the rockes blake
Of Britayne, were vanysshed euerychone
And shippes by the brinke to comen & gone
And in suche forme enduren a yere or two
Then were my brother warysshed of his wo
Then must she nedes holde her behest
Or elis he shall shame her at the lest.
What shulde I make a lenger tale of this
Vnto his brothers bedde he comen is
And suche comforte he vaue hym for to gone
To Orliaunce, that he vp sterte anone
And on his way than is he forthe ystare
In hope to ben lessed of his care.
When they were comen almoste to ỳ cyte
(But if it were a two furlonge or thre)
A yonge clerke rooming by him selfe they met
Whiche that in latyn thriftely hem gret
And after warde he sayd a wonder thyng
I knowe the cause of your comyng
And er they farther any fote wente
He tolde hem all that was in her entente
This Britton clerke asked him of felawes
The whiche he had knowen in olde dayes
He answerde hym, that they dede were
For whiche he wept ofte ful many a tere.
Downe of his horse Aurelyus light anon
And with this magicien forth is he gon
Home to his house, and made him wel at ese
Hem lacked no vitayle that hem might plese
So wel arayde an house as there was one
Aurelyus in his lyfe sawe neuer none.
He shewed him, or he went to suppere
Forestes and parkes, ful of wylde dere
He sawe there hertes, with hornes hye
The greatest that euer were sene with eye
He sawe of hem an hundred slayn with houndes
And some of arowes bled in bitter woundes
He sawe, when voyded were the wilde dere
These fauconers, vpon a fayre ryuere
That with the haukes haue the heron slayne.
The sawe he knightes iustinge in a playne
And after this he dyd him suche plesaunce
That he him shewed his lady in a daunce
On which him selfe daūced as him thought
And whē this maister, ỳ this magike wrought
Sawe it was time, he clapped his hōdes to
And farewell our reuell, all was ago
And reuersed neuer out of hys house
While they sawe al this sight merueylouse
But in his studye there hys bookes be
They saten stylle, no wight but they thre.
To him this maister called hys squier
And sayde him, thus, is redy our supper
Almoste an houre it is, I vndertake
Sythen I you bad our supper redy make
Whan that these worthy men went with me
Into my studye, there as my bokes be
Syr, qd the squier, whan it lyketh you
It is all redy, though ye wol ryght nowe.
Go we suppe than, qd he, for the best
These amorous folke some mote haue rest
And after supper fell they in treete
What sōme shulde thys maister queerken be
To remeue all the rockes of Britayne
And eke from Gyronde to the mouth of sayne.
He made it straunge & sware so god him saue
Lasse thē a thousād poonde wold he not haue
Ne gladly for that sōme nolde he it don.
Aurelyus with blisful herte anon
Answerde thus: fye on a thousande poūde
This wyde world, which men say is roūde
I wolde it reue, if I were lorde of it
Thys bargayne is full dryue, for we be knit
Ye shal be payde truely by my trouthe
But loke nowe for no negligence or slouthe
Ye tarryen vs here no lenger then to morowe
Nay, qd this clerk, here my trouth to borowe

To

¶ Tobedde is gon Aurelius when hym leste
And well nye al night he had hys reste
What for hys labour, and his hope of blisse
Hys woful herte of penaunce had a lisse.
¶ Upon the morowe when that it was day
To Brytayne toke they the right way
Aurelyus, and this magycien hym bisyde
And ben discended there they wolde abyde
And this was, as the boke doth remembre
In the colde frosty seson of Decembre.
¶ Phebus wexed olde, & hewed lyke laton
That afore in his hote declinacion
Shone as ỳ brenning gold, wh stremes bright
But nowe in Capricorne adowne he light
Where as he shone full pale, I dare wel sayne
The bitter frostes, with the sleet and rayne
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerde
Janus sit by the fire with double berde
And drinketh of his bugle horne the wine
Biforn him stont braun of the tusked swine
And nowel crieth every lusty man.
¶ Aurelius, in al that every he can
Doth to his maister chere and reuerence
And prayeth him to don his diligence
To bringen him out of his paynes smerte
Or with a swerd that he wold sterve his herte.
This clerke suche routh hath on this man
That night & day he spedeth him that he can
To wayte a time of his conclusion
This is to say, to make illusion
Or suche an apparence or iogelrye
I ne can no termes of astrologye
That she and every wight should wene & say
That of Brytayne the rockes were away
Or elis they were sonken vnder the grounde
Thus hath the lasse he hath his time y founde
To make his japes and hys wrecchydnesse
Of suche superstitious cursydnesse
His tollyten tables he forthe brought
Ful wel correcten, him lacked nought
Neither his collecte, ne hys expans yeres
Ne his rootes, ne his other geres
As ben hys centrys, and his argumentes
And hys proporcionell conuenyentes
For his equacions in every thyng
And by his eyght speres in his werkyng
He knew ful wel how far a nath was shoue
Fro the heed of thilke fire Aries aboue
That in the mynth sperc considered is
Ful subtelly he had calked all this
And when he had founde his first mansyon
He knewe the remnaunt by proporcyon
And knewe the ryssyng of the moone wele
And in suche face, the terme and every dele
And knewe also his other obseruaunces
For suche illusions and suche mischaunces
As hethen folke vsed in thilke dayes
For whiche ne maked he no lenger delayes
But through his magike, for a weke or twa
It semed that al the rockes were away.
¶ Aurelius, whiche that dispeyred is
Whether he shal haue his loue, or fare amis
Awaiteth night and day on this miracle
And when he knewe there was non obstacle
But ỳ voyded wer these rockes every chon
Downe to the maisters fete he fel anon
And sayd, I woful wrecche Aurelyus
Thanke you lorde and lady myn Venus
That me hath holpen fro my cares colde
And to ỳ temple his way forth hath he holde
Where as he knewe he shulde his lady se
And when he sawe his time, anon right he
With dredfull herte, & with humble chere
Salued hath his soueravne lady dere.
¶ My right full lady (qd this woful man)
Whom I serue and loue, as I beste can
And lothest were of al this worlde displese
Nere it that I for you haue suche disese
That I muste dye here at your fete anon
Noust wold I tel you how wo is me begon
But certes either must I dye or playne
Ye slee me gylteles for very payne
But of my dethe, though ye haue no routhe
Auisen you, er that ye breken your trouthe
Repenteth you, for that ylke God aboue
For ye slee me, bycause that I you loue
For madame, wel ye wot that ye haue right
Nor that I chalenge any thyng of right
Of you my soueravn lady, but of your grace
But in a garden yonde in suche a place
Ye wote right well what ye bight me
And in my honde your trouthe plight ye
To loue me best, god wote ye sayd so
Al be it I am vnworthye therto
Madame I spoke for the honour of you
More than for to saue myn herte s lyfe nowe
I haue done right as ye commaunded me
And ỳ ye bouche safe, ye may go se
Doth as you list, haueth your terme in mynde
For quick or dede, right there ye shal me finde
In you lieth all to do me lyue or dey
But well I wote the rockes ben awey
He toke his leue, and she astonyed stode
In al her face there nas a droppe of blode
She wende neuer han come in such a trappe
Alas (qd she) that euer this shulde happe

For wende I neuer by possibilite
That such a mister or meruayle myght be
It is ayenst the processe of nature
And home she goth a sorowful creature
For very feare vnnethes may she go
She wepeth and wayleth a day or two
And swouneth, that it was routh to se
But why it was to no wight tolde she
For out of towne was gon Arueragus
But to her selfe she spake, and sayd thus
In her complaynt, as ye shal after here
With face pale, & with sorowful chere.
¶ Alas (quō she) on the fortune I playne
That vnware hath wrapped me in the chaine
Fro which to escape, wot I no socoure
Saue onely dethe, or elis dishonoure
One of these two behoueth me to chese
But natheles, yet had I leuer to lese
My lyfe, than of my body to haue a shame
Or know my selfe false, or lese my name
And with my dethe, I may be quit twis
Hath there not many a wyfe er this
And many a mayde slayne her selfe alas
Rather than with her body done trespas
And certes so, these stories beren witnesse
Whan thirty tyrantes, ful of cursydnesse
Had slayne Phidon, in Athenes at the feest
They cōmaunded his doughters to arest
And bringen hem byfore hem in despyte
Al naked, to fulfyl her foule delyte
And in her fathers blode, he dyd hem daūce
Vpō the pauement, god yeue him mischaūce
For which these woful maydens ful of drede
Rather than they wold lesen her maydenhede
They prively ben sterte into a well
And drenched hem selfe, as bokes tell.
¶ They of Messene let enquire and seke
Of Lacedomony fyfty maydens eke
On which they wold haue done her lecherye
But there was none of al that company
That she nas slayne, and with a glad entent
Chese rather for to dyen, than for to assent
To ben oppressed of her maydenhede
Why shuld I than to dye ben in drede
¶ Lorke the tyraunt Aristoclides
That loued a mayd, hight Semphalydes
Whan that her father slayne was on a night
Vnto Dyanes temple goth she anon right
And hent the ymage, with her armes two
Fro which image wold she neuer go
No wight might fro it her hondes race
Tyl she was slayne, right in the selfe place.
¶ Now sithes yt maidens had such despite
To ben defouled with mannes foule delyte
Wel ought a wyfe rather her selfe slee
Than be defouled, as thinketh me.
¶ What shal I say of Hasdruballes wyfe
That at Cartage byraft her selfe her lyfe
For whā she sawe yt Romanes wan yt town
She tok her children al, and lepte adown
Into the fyre, and chese rather to dye
Than any Roman dyd her vilanye.
¶ Hath not Lucrece slayne her selfe, alas
At Rome, there she oppressed was
Of Tarquyne, for her thought it was shame
To lyue, whan that she had lost her name.
¶ The eyght maydens of Melesye also
Han slayn hem selue for very drede and wo
Rather thā folke of Gaule shuld hē oppresse
Wo than a thousande stories, as I gesse.
Routh I now tel as touching this matere.
¶ Whā Ibradas was slayn, his wife so dere
Her selfe slowe, and let her bloode to glyde
In Ibradas woundes, brode and wyde
And sayd, my body at the leest way
There shal no wight defoule it I may.
¶ What shuld I mo ensamples herof sayne
Sythens that so many hath hem selfe slayne
Wel rather than they wolde defouled be
I wol conclude that it is best for me
Wel rather slee my selfe in some maniere
As dyd Demotious doughter dere
Because that she nolde not defouled be.
¶ O Sedasus, it is full great pyte
To reden howe thy doughters dyden, alas
That slowen hem selfe for such a maner cas
As great a pyte was it or wel more
The Theban maiden, that for Nichanore
For one of Macedone had her oppressed
With her deth her maydenhede she redressed
¶ What shal I sayne of Nycerates wyfe
That for such case byraft her selfe her lyfe
¶ How trew was eke to Alcibrades
His loue, that for to dyen rather chees
Than for to suffren his body vnburyed be.
¶ Lo whiche a wyfe was Alceste (quō she)
What sayth Homere of good Penelope
All Grece knoweth of her chastite.
¶ Pardee of Laodomia is writen thus
That whā at Troy was slayn Protheselaus
No lenger nolde she lyue after his day.
¶ The same of noble Porcia tell I may
Withouten Brutus coude she not lyue
To whom she had al her herte yeue.
¶ The parfyte wyfehode of Arrentia
Honoured is, throughout al Barbary

¶ O Thenta quene, thy wifely chaſtyte
To al wyues may a myrrour be.
The ſame thing I ſay of Bilia
Of Rodogone, and eke Valeria.
¶ Thus playned Dorigene a day or twey
Purpoſyng euer that ſhe wold dey
But natheleſſe vpon the thirde nyght
Home came Arueragus, the worthy knight
And aſked her why ſhe weyte ſo ſore
And ſhe gan wepen euer lenger the more
¶ Alas qǒ ſhe that euer was I borne
Thus haue I ſaid qǒ ſhe thus haue I ſworn
And tolde him al, as ye haue herde before
It nedeth not to reherce it no more.
¶ This huſbǒde wh glad chere in ſǒdre wiſe
Anſwerd and ſaide, as I ſhal you deuiſe
Is there aught els Dorigene but this.
Nay nay qǒ ſhe god helpe me ſo as wys
This is to moche, and it were goddes wyll.
¶ Ye wyfe qǒ he let ſlepe that is ſtyll
It may be wel yet paraunture to day
Ye ſhall your trouth holde by my fay
For god ſo wysly haue mercy on me
I had wel leuer ſtycked for to be
For verry loue whiche that I to you haue
But if ye ſhulde your trouth ſaue
Trouth is the hyeſt thing that mē may kepe
But with that word he braſt anon to wepe
And ſaid, I you forbyd on payne of dethe
That neuer whiles you laſteth lyfe or breth
To no wight tell of this miſauenture
As I may beſt I wel my wo endure
Ne make no countenaunce of heuyneſſe
That folke of you may deme harme ne geſſe
And forth he cleped a ſquier and a mayde
Goth forth anon with Dorigene he ſayde
And bringeth her in ſuch a place anone
They toke her leue, and on her way they gone
But they ne wyſte why ſhe thyder went
She nolde no wight tel her entent.
¶ This ſquire, which that hyght Aurelyus
On Dorigen, whiche that was ſo amerous
Of auenture happed her to mete
Amydde the towne, right in the hye ſtrete
As ſhe wold haue gon the way forth right
Towarde the garden, there as ſhe had hight
And he was to the garden warde alſo
For wel he ſpyed whan ſhe wold go
Out of her houſe, to any maner place
But thus they met of auenture or of grace
And he ſaluteth her with glad entent
And aſked of her whyder that ſhe went.
¶ And ſhe anſwerd halfe as ſhe were madde
Vnto the garden as my huſbonde badde
My trouth for to holde, alas alas.
Aurelyus gan wondren of this caas
And in his hert had great compaſſion
Of her chere, and of her lamentacion
And of Arueragus the worthy knyght
That bad her holde al that ſhe had hyght
So loth he was ỹ ſhe ſhuld breke her trouth
And in his hert he caught of it great routh
Conſidring the beſt on euery ſyde
That fro his luſt were him better abyde
Than do ſohye a churliſche wretchydneſſe
Ayenſt fraunchiſe, and ayenſt all gentyleneſſe
For which in fewe wordes ſaid he thus
Madame, ſayth to your lorde Arueragus
That ſythen I ſe this great gentileneſſe
Of him, and eke I ſe wel your diſtreſſe
That ye to me thus ſhuld hold your trouthe
Certes me thynketh it were great routhe
I haue wel leuer euer to ſuffre wo
Than depart the loue bytwyxt you two
I you releſe madame into your honde
Quyte euery ſurement and euery bonde
That ye haue made to me, as here byforne
Sythens thilke tyme that ye were borne
My trouth I plyȝt, I ſhal you neuer repreue
Of no beheſte, and here I take my leue
As of the treweſt and the beſte wyfe
That euer yet I knewe in all my lyfe
But euery wight beware of her byheſte
On Dorigene remembreth at the leſte
Thus can a ſquire done a gentyll dede
As wel as can a knight, withouten drede.
¶ She thonked him vpon her knees al bare
And home vnto her huſbonde is ſhe fare
And tolde him al, as ye han herde me ſayde
And be ye ſyker, he was ſo well apeyde
That it were vnpoſſible me to write
What ſhuld I lenger of this caſe endite?
Arueragus, and Dorigen his wyfe
In ſouerayne blyſſe leden forth her lyfe
Neuer after was there angre hem bytwene
He cheriſhed her, as though ſhe wer a quene
And ſhe was to him trewe for euermore
Of theſe two folkes ye get of me nomore.
Aurelyus, that his coſt hath all forlorne
Curſeth the tyme that euer he was borne
Alas qǒ he alas that euer I beheyght
Of pured gold a thouſande pounde of weight
Vnto this philoſopher, how ſhal I do?
I ſe no more, but that I am fordo
Myn heritage muſt I nedes ſell
And be a begger, here may I no lǒger dwell
And

And shame al my kynrede in this place
But I of him may get better grace
But natheleſſe I wol of him aſſay
At certayne dayes, yere by yere to pay
And thonke him of his great curteſye
My trouth wol I kepe, I wol not lye.
¶ With hert ſore, he goth vnto his cofer
And brought gold vnto this philoſopher
The value of tyue hundred pounde as I geſſe
And him beſecheth of his gentilneſſe
To graunt him dayes of the remenaunt
And ſaid: maiſter I dare well make auaunt
I fayled neuer of my trouth as yet
For ſikerly my det ſhal be quite
Towardes you, how that euer I fare
To gon a beggyng in my kyrtel bare
But wolde ye vouchesafe vpon ſuerte
Two yere or thre for to reſpyte me
Than were I wel, for els mote I ſell
Myn herytage, there is no more to tell.
¶ This philoſopher ſoberly anſwerde
And ſaid thus, whan he this worde herde
Have I not holde couenaunt vnto the?
Yes certes, wel and truely (quod he)
¶ Haſt thou not had thy lady as the lyketh?
No no (quod he) and ſoothly he lyketh
¶ What was the cauſe, tel me if ỹ thou can.
Aurelyus anon his tale began
And tolde him al as ye han herd before
It nedeth not to reherce it any more.
He ſaid Aruiragus of gentylneſſe
Had leuer dye in ſorowe and in diſtreſſe
Than his wife were of her trouthe falſe
The ſorowe of Dorigene he tolde him alſo
How lothe ſhe was to ben a wycked wife
And that ſhe had leuer haue loſt her lyfe
And ỹ her trouth ſhe ſwore through innocēce
She nowe erſte herde ſpeke of apparence
That made me haue of her ſo great pite
And right as freely as he ſent her to me
In freely ſent I her to him agayne
This is al a ſome, there nys no more to ſayn.
The Philoſopher anſwerde, leue brother
Euerich of you did gentylly to other
Thou art a ſquier, and he is a knyght
But god forbyd, for his bliſful myght
But if a clerke could done a gentyl dede
As wel as any of you, it is no drede
Sir I releſe the thy thouſande pounde
As now thou were crope out of the grounde
Ne neuer er now haddeſt thou knowen me
For ſir, I wol not taken a peny of the
For all my craft, ne nought for my trauayle
Thou haſt ipayed right wel for my bitayle
It is ynough, and farwel a haue good day
And toke his horſe, and rode forth on his way.
¶ Lordinges this queſtiō wold I aſke now
Whiche was the moſte fre, as thynketh you
Now telleth me, er that I ferther wende
I can no more, my tale is at an ende.

¶ Here endeth the Frankeleyns tale,
and begynneth the ſeconde
Nonnes prologue.

The miniſtre and the norice
vnto vyces
Which that men clepen in en-
gliſhe idelneſſe
That is porter of the gate of
delyces
To eſchue, and by her contrary her oppoſite
That is to ſayne, by leful beſyneſſe
Well ought we to don our entente
Leſt that the fende through idleneſſe vs hente

¶ For he that with his thouſande cordes ſlye
Continually vs wayteth to be claſpe
Whan he may man in ydleneſſe eſpye
He can ſo lightly catche him in his trappe
Tyll that a man be hente, right by the lappe
He nys not ware the fende hath him in honde
Wel ought vs werche, and ydelneſſe withſtonde

¶ And though men dredden neuer for to dye
Yet ſe men wel by reſon doutles
That ydleneſſe is rote of ſlogardye
Of which there cometh neuer no good ende
And ſithnes ỹ slouth holdeth hem in a lees
Only to slepe, and for to eate and drinke
And to deuourren al that other ſwynke

¶ And for to put vs from ſuche ydelneſſe
That cauſe is of ſo great confuſyon
I haue here done my faythful beſyneſſe
After the legende in tranſlacion
Right of thy glorious lyfe and paſſion
Thou with thy garlond, wrought with roſe and lely
The mene I, mayde and martir ſeynt Cecely

¶ And thou that art floure of virgins all
Of whom that Bernarde lyſt ſo wel to write
To the at my begynnyng firſt I call
Thou comfort of vs wyches, do me endyte
Thy maidēs deth, ỹ wan thorow her merite
The eternal lyfe, and of the fende victorie

As men may after rede in her storie.

Thou mayde & mother, doughter of thy sonne
Thou well of mercy, synful soules cure
In whō that god of bounte chese for to wōne
Thou humble and hye ouer euery creature
Thou noblest, so farre ouer nature
That no disdayne the maker had of kynde
His sōne in blode & flesshe to clothe & wynde.

Whiche in the cloystre of thy blysful sydis
Toke mans shappe, the eterne loue & pees
That of the trine compas, lorde and gyde is
Whom heuen, erthe, and see, withouten les
Ayre heryen, and thou virgyne wemles
Bare of thy body, & dwellest mayden pure
The creatour of euery creature.

Assembled is in the magnificence
With mercy, goodnesse, and with suche pyte
That thou art the sonne of excellence
Not onely that helpest hem that prayen the
But often tyme of thy benignyte
Ful freely, or that men thyn helpe beseche
Thou goste before, and art her lyues leche

Now helpe ō blysfull, & meke fayre mayde
We flemed wrecche, in this desert of gall
Thinke on ꝑ woman of Canane, that sayde
That whelpes eate some of ꝑ crōmes small
That from her lordes table ben y fall
And though ꝑ I vnworthy doughter of Eue
Be synful, yet accepteth my beleue.

And for that faith is deed withouten werkis
So for to werche, yene me wytte and space
That I be quit from ꝑ place ꝑ most derk is
O thou that art so fayre and ful of grace
Be myn aduocate in that hye place
There as without ende is song Osanna
Thou Christes mother, & doughter of Anna

And of thy light, my soule in prison light
That troubled is by the contagyon
Of my body, and also by the wight
Of erthly lust, and also false affection
O hauen, O refute, O saluacion
Of hem that ben in sorowe and distresse
Now helpe, for to my werke I wol me dresse

Yet I pray you that reden that I write
Forgeueth me, that I do no dyligence
This like storie subtelly to endyte
For both haue I the wordes & the sentence
Of him that at the saintes reuerence
The storie wrote, and folowen her legende
And pray you that ye wol my werke amende

First wol I you the name of seynt Cecily
Expowne, as men may in her storye se
It is to say in Englysshe, heuens lyly
For pure chastnes of virginite
Or for the wytnesse had of honeste
And grene of conscience, and of good fame
The sote sauour lyly was her name

Or Cecily is to say, the way to blynde
For the ensample was by good teching
Or els Cecily, as I writen fynde
Is ioyned by a maner conioynyng
Of heuen and Lya, in her figuring
The heuen is set for thought of holynesse
And Lya, for her lastyng besynesse

Cecily may eke be said in this manere
Waning of blyndnesse, for her great lyght
Of sapience, and for her thewes clere
Or els Leo, this maydens name bryght
Of heuen & Leos cometh, of which by right
Men might the heuen of people her call
Ensample of good and wise werkes all

For Leos people, in Englisshe is to say
And right as men may in the heuen se
The sunne, and moone, & sterres euerye way
Right so men gostly, in this mayden see
Sawen of faith, the great magnanymite
And eke the clerenesse hole of sapience
And sondrie werkes, bright of excellence

And right so as these philosophers write
That heuen is swift, rounde, & eke brennyng
Right so was fayre Cicely the white
Full swifte and besy in euery good worknyng
And rounde and hole in good perseuerynge
And brennyng euer in charite ful bright
Now haue I declared you what she hyght.

Here endeth the seconde nonnes prologue, and begynneth her tale

THis maiden bryght Cecile, as her life sayth
Was comē of Romains and of noble kynde
And so forth fostred vp in the faith
Of Christ, and bare hys gospel in her mynde
She neuer cessed, as I written fynde
Of her prayer, and god to loue and drede
Besechyng him to kepe her maydenhede

¶ And whān this mayde shuld vnto a man
Iwedded be, that was ful yong of age
Whiche that yeleped was Valeryan
And day was come of her maryage
She ful deuout and humble in her corage
Under her robe of gold, ꝑ sat ful fayre
Had next her flesshe yclad her in an heyre

¶ And whiles ꝑ the organs made melodye
To god alone thus in herte songe she
O lorde, my soule and eke my body gye
Vnwemmed, lest I confounded be
And for his loue that dyed vpon a tre
Euery seconde or thirde day she faste
Eye byddyng in her orisons full faste.

¶ The night cam, & to bed must she gone
With her husbonde, as often is the maniere
And priuely she sayd vnto him anon
O swete and wel byloued spouse dere
There is a counsayle, and ye wol it here
Which that right fayne I wold to you saine
So that ye me ensure, it not to bewrayne.

¶ Valeryan gan fast vnto her swere
That for no cas, ne thyng that might be
He shulde neuer to none bewrayen here
And than at erste, thus to him sayd she
I haue an angel, whiche that loueth me
That wt grete loue, where so I wake or slepe
Is redy aye, my body for to kepe

¶ And if that he may felen out of drede
That ye me touche or loue in vylonye
He right anon wyl slee you with the dede
And in your youth thus shal ye dye
And if that ye in clene loue me gye
He wol you loue as me, for your clennesse
And shewe you of his ioye and brightnesse.

¶ This Valerian, corrected as god wolde
Answerd ayen, if I shal trust the
Let me that aungell se, and him beholde
And if that it a very aungel be
Than wol I done as thou hast prayd me
And if thou loue another man forsothe
Right wt this sword thā wol I slē you bothe

¶ Cecyle answerd anon in this wyse
If that ye lust, that angel shal ye se
So that ye trowe on Christ, & you baptyse
Goth forth to Via apia (qd she)
That frō this town ne stante but myles thre
And to the pore folke that there dwell
Say hem right thus, as I shal you tell.

¶ Tel hem that I Cecyle, you to hem sende
To shewen you the good Vrban the olde
For secret nedes, and for good entent
And whan that ye saynt Vrban han beholde
Tel him the wordes, that I to you tolde
And whan that he hath purged you fro sinne
Than shall ye se that angel er ye twynne.

¶ Valeryan is to that place ygon
And right as him was taught by his lerning
He founde this holy Vrban anon
Among these sarmtes burials lourying
And he anon, without tarryeng
Dyd his message, and whan he had it tolde
Vrban for ioy, gan his hondes vp holde.

¶ The teres from his eyen let he fall
Almighty god, O Jesu Christ (qd he)
Sower of chaste counsayle, herde of vs all
The fruit of thilke sede of chastete
That thou hast sowe in Cecile, take to the
Lo lyke a besy bee, without en gyle
She serueth aye thyn owne thrall Cecile

¶ For thilke spouse, that she toke but newe
Ful like a fierce lyon, she sendeth here
As meke as any lambe was to ewe
And with that word, anon there gan apere
An olde man, clad in white clothes clere
That had a boke with letters of gold in hōd
And gan byfore Valeryan for to stond.

¶ Valeryan as deed fel downe for drede
Whan he this olde man saw standyng so
Whiche forthwith anon he herde him rede
O lord, O fayth, O god without en mo
Of Christendome, and father of al also
Aboue al, and ouer al euery where

These wordes al with gold writtem were.

Whan this was rad, thā sayd this olde man
I wrest thou this thing or none, say ye or nay
I leue al this thing (qd Valeryan)
Under the heuen no wight me thinke may
Sothen thyng than this, I dare well say
Tho vanyssbed the olde man, he nyst where
And pope Vrban him christened right there.

¶ Valerian goth home, & fynderh Cecilye
Within his chambre, with aungel stonde
This aungel had of rost and of lylye
Crownes two, the whiche he bare in bonde
And first to Cecyle as I vnderstonde
He yaue that one, and after gan he take
That other to Valeryan her make.

With body clene, & vnwemmed thought
Keepe thare wel these crownes (qd he)
From paradyse to you I haue hem brought
Ne neuer more shullen they rotten be
Ne lese her swete sauour, trusteth me
Ne neuer wight shal seme hem with eye
But he be chast, and hate vilonye

¶ And thou Valeryan, for thou so leue
Assentedest to good counsayle also
Say what thou wilt, and thou shalt haue thy bone
I haue a brother (qd Valeryan tho)
That in this world I loue no man so
I pray you that my brother may haue grace
To knowe the trouth, as I do in this place.

The angel answerd, god liketh your request
And both with the palme of martirdome
Shal ye come vnto the blysful fest
And whan Cecyle this brother come
And whan that he the sauour vndernome
Which that the roses and the lylyes caste
Within his hert he gan to wonder faste.

¶ And sayd: I wonder this tyme of the yere
Whence that this sote sauour cometh so
Of roses and of lylies, that I smell here
For though I had hem in myn hondes two
The sauour myght in me no deper go
The swete smel, that in myn hert I fynde
Hath chaunged me al in another kynde.

¶ Valeryan sayd, two crownes haue we
Snowe white & rose reed, that shyneth clere
Which that thyn eyen han no might to se
And as thou smellest hem through my prayere
So shalt thou seen hem my leue brother dere
If it so be that thou wilte withoute slouthe
Leue a right, and knowe the very trouthe

¶ Tyburce answerd, sayest thou this to me
In sothnesse, or in dreme herken I this
In dremes (qd Valeryan) han we be
Vnto this tyme, brother myn ywys
But now at erst, our dwellyng in trouth is
Now wolt thou (qd Tyburce) in what wise
Quod Valeryan, that I shal the deuyse.

The angel of god hath me þ trouth taught
Which thou shalt seen, & thou wylt renoy
The ydols, and be clene, and elis naught
And of the myracles of these crownes two
Sayut Ambroise in his preface list to sey
Solempnely this noble doctour dere
Commendeth it, and saith in this maniere.

¶ The palme of martirdom for to receyue
Seynt Cecyle fulfylled of gods yefte
The world & eke her chambre gan she weiue
Wherefore Tyburce, and Cecyles thrifte
To which god of his bounte wolde shyfte
Crownes two, of flowres wel smellyng
And made the angel hem the crownes bring.

The maid hath brought hem to blysse aboue
The world hath wist what it is worth certain
Deuocion and chastite wel for to loue
Tho shewed him Cecile al open and playne
That al ydolles ben but thynges in vayne
For they ben doumbe, & therefore they ben defe
And charged him his ydoles for to lefe.

¶ Who that troweth not this, a beest he is
(Qd this Tyburce if that I shal not lye)
She kyssed his brest whan she herde this
And was ful glad he coube the trouth espye
This day take I the for myn alliye
Sayd this blysful mayden fayre and dere
For after that she sayd as ye may here.

¶ Lo right so as the loue of Christ (qd she)
Made me thy brothers wyfe, right in þ wise
Anon for myn alye here take I the
Sothens that thou wolt thine ydols dispyse
Go with thy brother now, & the baptise
And make the clene, so þ thou mayst beholde
The angels face, of which thy brother tolde

Tyburce

Tiburce answerde, and sayd: brother dere
First tell me whether I shal, & to what man
To whom he sayd, come forth ye good chere
I wol the lede vnto the pope Urban
To Urban brother myn Valeryan
(Qd this Tiburce) wilt thou me thider lede
Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede

¶ Ne menest thou not Urban (qd he tho)
That is so ofte dampned to be deed
And wonneth in halkes to and fro
And dare not ones put forth his heed
Men shulde him brenne in a fyre so reed
If he were founde, and men might him spye
And we also, that bere him companye

¶ And while we seken thylke diuinite
That is vhidde in heuen priuely
Algate vhenne in this worlde shuld we be
To whom Cecile answerde boldely
Men might diede well and skylfully
This lyfe to lese, myn owne dere brother
If this were lyuing onely and non other.

¶ But there is better liuing in other place
That neuer shalbe lost, ne diede the nought
which goddes son vs told through his grace
That fadres sonne hath al thing wrought
And al ỹ wrought is with a skilfull thought
The gost that from the father gan procede
Hath souled hym without any diede.

¶ By word and by miracle, the goddes sonne
When he was in this worlde, declared here
That there is other life there men may wonne
To whom answerd Tiburce: O suster dere
Ne sayd est thou right nowe in this manere
There nas but one god lorde in sothfastnesse
And nowe of thre howe may ỹ here witnesse.

¶ That shal I tel (qd she) or that I go
Right as a man hath fadres three
Memorie, engyne, and intellecte also
So in suche beyng of diuinite
The persons may there right wel be
Tho gan she there ful besily him preche
Of Christes sonne, and of his passiones teche

¶ And many poyntes of his passion
How gods sonne in this worlde was vholde
To do mankynde playne remyssyon
That was bounde in sennes & cares colde
Al these thinges she vnto Tiburce tolde
And after this Tiburce in good entent
With Valerian to pope Urban went.

That thonked god, & with glad herte & light
He christened him, & made him in that place
Perfyte in hys leeuyng goddes knight
And after this Tiburce gate suche grace
That euery day he sawe in eyne and space
The aungel of god, and euery manere boone
That he god asken, it was sped full soone

¶ It were full harde by order for to tarne
How many wonders Jesu for him wrought
But at the laste, to tel shorte and playne
The sergeaunt of the toune hem sought
And hem before Almache ỹ provost brought
Which hem apposed, & knewe al her entent
And to the ymage of Jupiter hem sent.

¶ And sayd, who so wol do no sacrifice
Swappe of his heed, this is my sentence here
Anon these martyrs, that I you deuyse
One Paramus that was an officere
Of the prefectes, and his conseiller
Hem hent, & when he forth the tarmes lad
Him selfe he wepte for pure that he had

When Paramus had herd this tamers lore
He gate hem of the turmentours leue
And had hem to his house without more
And with her preching, er that it were eue
They gon from the turmentour reue
And fro Paramus, & from his folke ychone
The false fayth, to leue wel in god alone.

¶ Cecily came, when it was worn myght
With preestes, that him christened al in fere
And afterward, when day was worn light
Cecile hem sayd with a sober chere
Now Christes own knightes leue & dere
Casteth al away the werkes of derkenesse
And armeth you in armoure of brightenesse

Ỹ when forsoth ydone a great barade serued
Your cours is don, your fayth hache you sau-
Gothe to the crowne of lyfe ỹ may not fayle
The righteful iuge, whiche ye han serued
Shal yeue it you as ye it deserued
And when this thing was sayd, as I deuyse
Anon lad hem forth to done the sacrifice

But whi they were brought to the place thought
To tell shortly the conclusioun

They nolde ensence ne sacrifice right nought
But on her knees, they saten hem adoun
With humble herte and sadde deuocion
And lossen bothe her beedes in the place
Her soules went to the kyng of grace.

This Maximus that sawe the thing betyde
With pitous teares tolde it anon ryght
That he her soules sawe to heuen glyde
With aungels full of clerenesse and of lyght
And with his word conuerted many a wyght
For whiche Almachius dyd him so to bete
With whippes of lede, til he his life gan lete

Cecile hym toke, and buryed hym anon
By Tiburce and Valeryan softely
Within her buryeng place vnder a stone
And after this Almachius hastely
Bad his ministers fetchen openly
Cecily, so that she might in his presence
Do sacrifice, and Jupiter encence

But they conuerted at her wyse lore
Wepten full sore, and yaue full credence
Vnto her worde, and cryden more and more
Christe goddes sonne, without difference
Is very god this is all our sentence
That hath a seruaunt so good hym to serue
Thus wo betyde we trow though we sterue

Almachius, that herde all thys doyng
Bad fetche Cecile, that he myght her se
And alderfirst this was his askyng
What maner woman arte thou (qd he)
I am a gentyll woman borne (quod she)
I aske of the (quod he) though it the greue
Of thy religion and of thy beleue.

Ye haue begon your question folishly
(Qd she) that wolde two answers conclude
In one demaunde, ye asken leudly
Almachius answerde to that similitude
Of whence cometh thyn answere so rude
Of whence (qd she) when ꝑ she was frayned
Of conscience, and of good fayth vnfayned.

Almachius sayd, ne takest thou none hede
Of my power: and she him answerde this
Your might (qd she) full litell is to drede
For euery mortall mannes power nys
But lyke a bladder full of wynde ywys
For with a nedles poynt, when it is yblowe
Way al the boste of it be layde full lowe.

Ful wrongfully beganste thou (qd he)
And yet in wronge is thy perseueraunce
Woste thou not how our mighty princes ha
Haue thus cõmaũded a made ordinaunce
That euery christen wight shal haue penaũce
But if that he his christendome withsey
And gon al quite, if he wol it reney.

Your princes erren, as your nobles doth
Quod tho Cecily, in a wode sentence
Ye make vs gilty, and it is not sothe
For ye that knowen wel our innocence
For as muche as we done a reuerence
To Christe, and for we bere a christen name
Ye put on vs a cryme and eke a blame.

But we that knowen thylke name so
For vertuous, we may it not withsey.
Almachius answerd, chese one of these two
Do sacrifice, or christendome reney
That thou mowe scapen by that wey
At whiche worde the holy blysful mayde
Gan for to laughe, and to the iudge she sayde

O iudge confused in thy nycete
Wolt thou that I reney innocence
To make me a wycked wight (qd she)
Lo he dissymuleth here in audyence
He stareth and woddeth in his aduertence
To whom Almachius sayd: O sely wrecche
Thou woste not howe farre my myght may (stretche

Hath not our myght princes yeuen
To me, bothe power and eke auctorite
To make folke to dyen or to liuen
Why spekest thou so proudly than to me
I ne speke it not but stedfastly (qd she)
Not proudely, for I say as for my syde
I hate deedly thylke vyce of pryde.

And yf thou diedest not a sothe for to here
Than wol I shewen all openly by ryght
That thou hast made a full great lesing here
Thou sayst thy princes han yeuen the might
Bothe to slee and eke to quicke a wight
Thou ne mayst but onely liue bereue
Thou hast non other power ne leue.

But thou mayst say, thy princes han ꝑ maked
Minister of dethe, for yf thou speke of mo
Thou lyest, for thy power is full naked
Do way thy boldnesse, sayde Almachius tho
And do sacrifice to our goddes or thou go

I recke not what wronge thou me profter
For I can not suffre, as can a philosopher

But thilke wronges may I not endure
That thou spekest of our gods here (qd he)
Cecile answerd, O nyce creature
Thou saidst no worde sithes þ spakest to me
That I ne knewe therwith thy nicite
And that thou were in euery maner wise
A lewde officer, and a vayne iustice.

Thy lacketh nothyng to thyne vtter eyen
That þ nart blynd, for thing þ we seen all
That is a stone, that men wel may aspyen
That like stone, a god thou wolt it call
I rede the let thyn honde vpon it fall
And taste it wel, a stone thou shalte it fynde
Sens that þ seest not vb thin eyen blynde

It is a shame that the people shall
So scorne the, and laugh at thy folye
For comenly men wot it well ouer all
That mighty god is in his heuens hye
And these ymages, wel mayste thou aspye
Cothe ne to hem selfe may they not profyte
For in her effecte, they be not worth a myte

Thus and suche other wordes sayd she
And he wore wroth, & bad she should be lede
Home to her house, and in her house (qd he)
Brenne her in a bathe, with flames rede
And as he bad, right so was done the dede
For in a bathe they gan her fast shetten
And night & day great fyre vnder they beten.

All the long nyght, and eke the day also
For al the fire, and eke the bathes hete
She sat al colde, and felt of it no wo
It made her not a droppe for to swete
But in that bath her lyfe she more lete
For Almachie, with a ful wicked entent
To sleen her in the bathe, his sonde sent

Thre strokes in the necke he smote her tho
The turmentour, but for no maner chaunce
He might not smyte al her necke a two
And for there was that tyme an ordynaunce
That no mã should do no person such penaunce
The fourth stroke to smyte, soft or sore
This turmentour durst smyte no more.

But halfe deed, vb her necke vronē there
He left her lye, and on his way he went
The christen folke that about her were
With shetes home ful fayre her hente
Thre dayes lyued she in this turmente
And neuer cessed she the fayth to teache
That she had frostred hem, she gan to preche

And hem she yaue her mouables & her thyng
And to the pope Urban betoke hem tho
And sayd, I asked this of the heuen kyng
To haue respite thre dayes and no mo
To recõmaunde to you er that I go
These soules, and that I might so werche
Here of myn house perpetuelly che a cherche.

Saynt Urban, with hys dekens priuely
The body fette, and buried it by night
Amonge his other saynctes honestly
Her house the churche of saint Cecile hight
Saynt Urban halowed it, as he wel might
In whyche vnto this day, in noble wyse
Men don to Christ & to his saynctes seruyse.

Here endeth the seconde nonnes tale.
and here begynneth the prologue
of the chanons yoman.

Whan ended was the lyfe of
saynte Cecile
Er we fully had rydden fyue
myle
At Boughtõ vnder the blee,
vs gan a take
A man, that clothed was in clothes blake
And vnder that he had a whyte surplise
His hakney, that was all pomely grise
So swette, that it wonder was to se
It semed that he had pricked myles thre
The horse eke that his yoman rode vpon
So swette, that vnneth might he gon
About the paytrell stode the fome ful hye
He was of fome as flecked as a pye
A male twyfolde on hys croper lay
It semed that he carryed lytell aray
All light for somer rode thys worthy man
And in my herte wondren I began
What that he was, tyll I vnderstode
Howe that his cloke was sewed to his hode
For whiche, when I had longe auised me
I demed him some chanon for to be
His hatte hinge at hys backe by a lace
For he had ridden more then trot or pace
He rode aye pricking as he were wode
A clote

I clote lefe he had layde vnder his hode
For swette, and for to kepe his heed fro hete
But it was ioye for to se him swete
His forehed dropped, as a stillatorye
Were full of plantayne or of pertorye
And when he was come, he gan crye
God saue (qd he) thys ioly companye
Fast haue I pricked (qd he) for your sake
Because that I wolde you ouertake
To rydden in thys mery companye
¶ Thys yoman was eke ful of curtesye
And sayd sirs, nowe in the morowe tyde
Out of your hostrye I sawe you ryde
And warned here my lorde and souerayne
Whiche that to rydden with you is ful fayne
For his disporte, he loueth daliaunce.
Fred for thy warnig god yeue þ good chãce
Then sayd our host, certayne it wolde seme
Thy lorde were wise, a so I may wel deme
He is ful iocunde also dare I laye
Can he ought tell a mery tale or twaye
Wyth whiche he glade may thys companye.
¶ Who sir my lorde? Ye without lye
He can of mirthe and eke of iolyte
Not but ynough also sir trusteth me
And ye him knewe also wel as do I
Ye wolde wonder howe well and thriftely
He coulde werke, and that in sondrye wise
He hath taken on hym many a great empryse
Whiche were ful harde, for any that is here
To bringe about, but they of hym it lere
As homely as he ryderh amonge you
If ye him knew, it wold ben for your prowe
Ye wolde not forgon hys aquayntaunce
For mochell good I dare laye in balaunce
All that I haue in my possessyon
He is a man of hye discretsyon
I warne you well he is a passyng wyse man.
¶ Wel (qd our hoste) I praye the tel me than
Is he a clerke or non? tell what he is.
¶ A clerke, nay he is greter thé a clerke ywis
Sayd the yoman, and in wordes fewe
Hoste of his crafte somwhat wol I shewe
I say my lorde can suche a subtelte
But all his craft ye may not wete of me
And somewhat helpe I yet to his werchyng
That all the grounde that we be on rydyng
Tyl we come to Canterbury towne
He coulde all clene turne vp and downe
And paue it al of syluer and of golde.
¶ And whan this yoman had thus yolde
Vnto our hoste: he sayde benedicite
This thing is wonder meruaylous to me
Seyng that thy lorde is of so hye prudence
(Bycause of which, men shuld him reuere)
That of his worthyp recketh he so lyte
Hys ouerest sloppe is not worth a myte
As in effecte to hym, so mote I go
It is al baudy and to tore also
Why is thy lorde so slothlyche I the pray
And is of power better clothes to bey
If that his dede acorde with thy speche
Tel me that, and that I the beseche.
¶ Why (qd this yeman) wherto aske ye me
God helpe me so, for he shal neuer the
But I wol not auowe that I saye
And therfore kepe it secret I you praye
He is to wise in fay, as I beleue
That is ouerdone nyl not preue
And right as clerkes sayne, it is a vyce
Wherfore I holde him in that, leude and nyce
For whan a man hath ouer great a wit
Ful ofte it happeth him to misusen it
So doth my lorde, and that me greueth sore
God amende it, I can say you no more.
¶ Therof no force good yeman (qd our host)
Seyng of the comyng of thy lorde thou wost
Tel howe he dothe, I pray the hertely
Seyng that he is so crafty and so sly
Wher dwellen ye, if it to tell be
¶ In the suburbes of a towne (qd he)
Lurkyng in hernes and in lanes blynde
Where these robers, and theues by kynde
Holden her priuy fearful residence
As they that dare not shewen her presence
So fare we, if that I shall say the soth.
¶ Yet (qd our host) let me talke to the
Why art thou so discoloured in thy face
¶ Peter (qd he) god yeue it harde grace
I am so vsed in the hote fyre to blowe
That it hath chaūged my colour as I trowe
I am not wont in no myrrour to prie
But swynke sore, and lerne to multiplye
We blondren euer, and poeren in the fyre
And for al that, we faylen of our desyre
For euer we lacken our conclusyon
To much folke we do illusion
And borowe gold, be it a pounde or two
Or ten or twelue, or many sūmes mo
And make hem wene at the lest way
That of a pounde we coulde make tway
Yet is it false, and aye han we good hope
It for to done, and after it we grope
But that science is so fyne vs byfore
We mowe not, al though we had it sworne
It ouertake, it flyt away so faste

It will vs make beggers at the laste.
whiles this yeman was thus in his talkyng
This chanon drewe him nere, & herd al thyng
Which this yeman spake, for suspection
Of mennes speche euer had this chanon
For Catoo sayeth, he that gylty is
Demeth all thing be spoken of hym ywis
Bycause of that, he gan so nyghe to drawe
To his yeman, to herken al his sawe
And thus he sayd vnto his yeman tho
Holde now thy peace, & speke no wordes mo
For if thou do, thou shalte it sore abye
Thou slaundrest me here in this companye
And eke discoueres that thou shuldest hyde.
Ye quod our host tel on what so euer betyde
Of al this threting, recke the not a myte.
¶ In fayth quod he no more do I but lyte
And whan this chanon saw it wolde not be
But his yeman wolde tel his priuite
He fledde away for very sorowe and shame.
¶ I quod the yeman here shall rise a game
All that I can, anon wol I you tell
Sens he is gon, the foule fende hym quell
For neuer here after, woll I with him mete
For penye ne for pounde, I you behete
Be that me brought first vnto that game
Er that he dye, sorowe haue he and shame
For it is erneste to me by my fayth
That fele I well, what so any man sayth
And yet for all my sinert and al my greue
For all my sorowe, labour and mischefe
I couthe neuer leaue it in no wyse
Nowe wolde god my witte my ght suffyce
To tellen all that longeth to that arte
But natheleste, yet woll I tel you a parte
Sens that my lord is gon, I woll not spare
Suche thing as I knowe I wol declare.

¶ Here endeth the prologue of the chanons yeman, and here folowerth his tale.

With this Chanon I dwelt seuen yere
And of his science I am neuer the nere
Al that I had, I haue loste therby
And god wotte, so hath many mo than I
Here I was wonte to be right fresche & gay
Of clothyng, and eke of other good aray
Nowe may I weare an hose vpon myn heed
And wher my colour was both freshe & reed
Nowe it is wanne, and of a leeden hewe
Whoso it vseth, sore shall hym rewe
And of my swynke, yet bleted is myn eye
Lo which auaumtage it is to multiplye
That sliding science, hath me made so bare
That I haue no good, where that euer I fare
And yet I am endetted so therby
Of golde, that I haue borowed trewely
That whyle I lyue, I shall it quite neuer
Let euery man beware by me euer
What maner man that casteth him therto
If he continue, I holde his thryfte ydo
So helpe me god, therby shall he neuer wyn
But empte his purse, & make his wittes thin
And when he, thorow his madnesse & folye
Hath loste his owne good, through iupardye
Than he exciteth other men therto
To lese her good, as hym selfe hath do
For vnto shrewes ioye it is and ese
To haue her felawes in peyne and disese
For thus was I ones lerned of a clerke
Of ý no charge, I wol speke of our werke
¶ When we be there, as we shall exercise
Our cluche crafte, we semen wonder wise
Our termes ben so clergiall and so quaynte
I blowe the fyre, tyll myn herte faynte.
¶ What should I tel eche proporcion
Of thynges, whiche we werchen vpon
As on fyue or sixe vnces, may well be
Of syluer, or of some other quantyte
And besye me to tellen you the names
Of orpyment, brent bones, iron squames
That vnto pouder grounden ben full small
And in an erthen potte, how we put vs all
And salte vput in, and also papere
Bytore these pouders that I speke of here
And well yeouered, with a lampe of glas
And of muche other thing that there was
And of the portes and glas englutting
That of the ayre myght passe out norbying
And of the esy fyre and sinerte also
Which that was made, and of the care & wo
That we had in our matters subliming
And in amalgaming, and calcening
Of quicksyluer, yeleped Mercury crude
For all our sleyght, we canne not conclude
Our orpyment, and sublymed Mercurye
Our grounde lytarge eke on porphurye
Of eche of these, vnces a certayne
Nat helpeth vs, our labour is in vayne
Ne eke our spirites assenen
Ne yet our matters, that lyen all fyxe adoun

Nowe

Wowre in our werkyng nothyng auayle
For losse is all our labour & our trauayle
And al the coste, a twenty deuyll way
Is losse also, whiche we vpon it lay.
¶ There is also full many a nother thyng
That is to our crafte apertayning
Though I by order hem ne reherce can
Because that I am a leude man
yet wol I tellen hem, as they come to minde
Thoughe I ne can sette hem in her kinde
As bole armoniake, verdegrece, boras
And sondrye vessels made of erth and glas
Our limals, and our diseccionres
Viols, crosselettes, and sublimatories
Cucurbites, and alembekes eke
And other suche, dere ynough a leke
It needeth not to reherce hem all
Waters rubifying, and boles gall
Arsmike, sal armoniake, and brimstone
And herbes coulde I tell eke many one
As Egremoyne, valeryan, and lunarye
And other suche, yf that me lyst to tarye
Our lampes burnyng bothe nyght and day
To bringen about our crafte, if that we may
Our fourneyes eke of calcinacion
And of waters albificacion
Vnsleked lyme, chalke, and glayre of an ey
Powders diuers, asshes, dong, pysse, & clay
Salt peter, salt peter, and vitriole
And diuers fyres, made of wode and cole
Sal tartre, alcaly, and sal preparate
And combust matters, and coagulate
Clay made with hors dunge, mans heere, & oyle
Of tartre alym, glas, berme, wort, & argoile
Rosage, and other matters enbibyng
And eke of our matters encorporyng
And of our sliuer citrination
Our fermentyng, and eke fermentacion
Our Ingotes testes, and many mo
I wol you tell as was me taught also
The foure spirites, and the bodyes seuen
By order, as ofte I herde my lorde nemene.
The first spirite quicke siluer cleped is
The seconde orpyment, the thirde ywis
Sal armoniake, the fourthe brimstone
¶ The bodyes seuene eke, lo here hem anone
Sol golde is, and Luna syluer we threpe
Mars yrón, Mercury quicke siluer we clepe
Saturnus leede, and Jupitur is tynne
And Venus coper, by my father kynne.
¶ This cursed crafte, who so woll exercise
He shal no good haue that may hym suffice
For all the good he spendeth ther aboute
He lese shall, therof haue I no doute
Also so that lysten to bren his foly
Let hym come forth and lerne to multyply
And euery man, that hath ought in his cofre
Let him apere, and wexe a philosofre
Askaunce that crafte is so lyght for to lere
Nay nay god wote, al be he monke or frere
Preest or chanon, or any other wight
Though he syt at his boke both day & nyght
In lerning of this cursed wicke lore
All is in vayne, and parde muche more
Is to lere a leude mannes wyt subtile
Lyre spoke not therof, it wol not be
Al coulde he letterure, or coulde he none
As in effecte, he shall fynde it all one
For bothe two, by my saluacion
Concluden in multiplicacion
Alyche wel, when they haue all ydo
This sis to sayne, they faylen bothe two.
¶ Yet forgate I muche to reherse ayle
Of waters corosyue, and of lyuayle
And of bodyes mollificacion
And also of her induracion
Cyles, ablusions, metall fusible
To tellen yow all, wolde passe any bible
That o where is, wherfore as for the beste
I al these names nowe wol I reste
For as I trowe, I haue you tolde ynowe
To reyse a fende, al loke he neuer so rowe.
¶ Nay let be the philosophres stone
Lat vs clepe, we seken faste echone
For had we hym, than were we syker ynowe
But vnto god of heuen I make auowe
For al our crafte, when that we han al ydo
And all our sleyght, he woll not come vs to
He hath made vs spende muche goode
For sorow of which, almost we waren wode
But that good hope creepeth in our herte
Supposyng euer, though we sore smerte
To ben releued of hym afterwarde
Supposyng and hope is sharpe and harde
I warne you well it is to syken euer
That future temps hath made men discreet
In trust therof, all that euer they had
Yet of that arte, they couldé not waxe sad
For vnto him it is a bytter swete
So semeth it, for ne had they but a shete
Which they might wrappen hem in a nyght
And a brattee to walken in a day light
They woldé hem sel, & spéde it on this craft
They come not flyttyng, yf nothyng be laft
And euer more, where that euer they gone
Men may hem ken by smell of brimstone

For

For al the worlde they stynken as a gote
Her sauour is so rammyshe and so hote
That though a man a myle from hem be
The sauour wol enfecte him trusteth me
Lo, thus by smelling, & by threde bare aray
If that men lyst, this folke knowe they may
And if a man wol aske him prively
Why they be clothed so burbrikely
Right anon they wol rowne in his ere
And sayne, if that they aspyed were
Men wol hem slee, because of her science
Lo thus these folke betrayen innocence
But passe ouer this, I go my tale vnto.
Er that the potte be on the fyre ydo
Of metalles, with a certayne quantite
My lorde hem tempereth, & no man but he
Now he is gon, I dare say boldely
For as men sayne, he can done craftely
Algate I wot wel he hath suche a name
And yet ful ofte he renneth in the blame
And wot ye how, ful ofte it happeth so
The pot tobrosteth, and farwel al is go
These metalles ben of so great violence
Our walles may not make hem resistence
But yf they were wrought of lyme and stone
They percen so, & through the wal they gone
And some of hem synken in to the grounde
Thus haue we lost by tymes many a pounde
And some are scatered al the flore aboute
Some lepen into the rofe without doute
That sytten now no more than they were nayle
Thus be we shrewed, & yet we holde counsayle
And whan the pot tobrosten is thus and broken
Than be we fayne for pure shame hem soken
And thanke our lorde of alle his sonde
Somtyme we haue syluer in our honde
Somtyme lede, somtyme neyther two ne one
Somtyme al wast and nothing wol come
Now with this fyre than wol we lyue and dye
But that the deuel sende vs prosperite
Now take good hede what I shal say
Ther was a chanon of relygyoun
Amonges vs, wold enfecte al a toun
Thogh it as great were as Ely ryse
Rome, Alysaundre, Troye, and other syse
His sleyght and his infynyte falsnesse
There couthe no man wryten as I gesse
Thogh that he myght lyue a thousand yere
In al this worlde of falsenesse nys his pere
For in his termes he wol him so wynde
And speke his wordes in so slye a kynde
Whan he comen shall with any wight
That he wol make him dote anon ryght
But it a fende be as him selfe is
Ful many a man hath he begyled er this
And mo wol, yf that he may lyue a while
And yet men ryden & gone ful many a myle
Him for to seke, and haue ofte anoyaunce
Not knowyng of his falsy gouernaunce
And yf ye lust to gyue me audyence
I wol it tellen here in your presence.

And on the floore cast a canuas
And al this mullocke in a syue ythrowe
And syfted and yplucked many a throwe.
Parde (qd one) somwhat of our metall
Yet is there here, thoughe we haue not all
And tho this thing mishapped hath as nowe
Another tyme it may ben wel ynowe
We mote put our good in auenture
A marchaunt parde, may not aye endure
Trusteth me well in his prosperite
Somtyme his good is drowned in the see
And somtyme it cometh safe vnto the londe
Peace (qd my lord) ynough of this tyme I wolde
To bring our craft al in an other plyte
And but I do, lyst me haue the wyte
There was defaute in somwhat wel I wote
Another sayd, the fyre was ouer hote
But be it hote or colde, I dare say this
That we concluden euer more amys
We faylen of that whiche we wold haue
And in our madnesse euer more we raue
And whan we be togyther euerychon
Euery man semeth as wyse as Salomon
But al thyng, which that shyneth as the golde
Is not golde, as I haue herde tolde
Ne euery appel that is fayre at eye
Nys not good, what so men dappe or crye
Right so it fareth among vs
He that semeth the wysest by Jesus
Is most fole, whan it cometh to the preef
And he that semeth trusty is a theef
That shal ye know, er that I from you wende
By that I of my tale haue made an ende.
There was a chanon of relygyoun
Amonges vs, would enfecte al a toun
Thogh it as great were as Ely ryse
Rome, Alysaundre, Troye, and other syse
His sleyght and his infynyte falsnesse
There couthe no man wryten as I gesse
Thogh that he myght lyue a thousand yere
In al this worlde of falsenesse nys his pere
For in his termes he wol him so wynde
And speke his wordes in so slye a kynde
Whan he comen shall with any wight
That he wol make him dote anon ryght
But it a fende be as him selfe is
Ful many a man hath he begyled er this
And mo wol, yf that he may lyue a while
And yet men ryden & gone ful many a myle
Him for to seke, and haue ofte anoyaunce
Not knowyng of his falsy gouernaunce
And yf ye lust to gyue me audyence
I wol it tellen here in your presence.

¶ But worshypful chanons religyouse
Ne demeth not that I sclaunder your house
Although my tale of a chanon be
Of euery order some shrewe is parde
And god forbyd that al a companye
Shuld rue a synguler mans folye
To slaunder you is not myne entente
But to correcte that mysse is mente
This tale was not onely tolde for you
But eke for other mo, ye wot wel how
That among Cristes apostles twelue
Ther was no traitour but Judas hym selue
Thā why shuld the remnaunt haue blame
That giltelesse were, by you I say the same
Saue only this, if ye wol herken me
If any Judas in your couent be
Remeueth hym betyme, I you rede
If shame or losse may causen any drede
And be nothyng displesed I you pray
But in this case herkeneth what I say.

In London was a prest annuellere
That therin had dwelt many a yere
Which was so plesaunt and so seruysable
Vnto the wyfe, where he was at table
That she wold suffre hym nothyng to paye
For bord ne clothyng, wente he neuer so gay
And spendyng syluer had he right ynowe
Therof no force, I wol procede as nowe
And tell forth my tale of the chanon
That brought this prest to confusion
¶ This false chanon came vpon a day
Vnto this prestes chambre, where he lay
Besechyng hym to lene hym a certayn
Of gold, and he wold quite hym ayen
Lenyth me a marke, qō he but dayes thre
And at my day I will quite it the
And if it so be, that thou fynde me false
Another day hange me by the halse
This prest toke hym a marke, and that swith
And this chanon hym thanked ofte syth
And toke his leaue, and went forth his wey
And at thirde day brought his money
And to this prest he toke this golde ayen
Wherof this prest was glad and fayn
¶ Certes qō he nothyng anoyeth me
To lene a man a noble, two or three
Or what thyng were in my possessyon
Whan he so trewe is of condicion
That in no wise he breke wol his day
To such a wight I can neuer say nay.
What qō this chanon, shulde I be vntrewe
Nay, that were thyng fallen of newe
Trouth is a thing that I wol euer kepe
Vnto the day, in whiche I shall crepe
Into my graue, or elis god forbede
Beleueth this as siker as your crede
God thanke I, and in good tyme be it sayd
That there nas neuer man yet yuel apayde
For golde ne syluer that he to me lent
Ne neuer falsche de in myne herte I ment.
And sir qō he nowe of my priuete
Sens ye so goodlyche haue ben to me
And kythe to me so great gentilnesse
Somwhat to quite with your kyndenesse
I wol you shewe, if ye wol it lere
(I shal it shewe to you anon right here)
Nowe I can werch in philosophye
Taketh good hede, ye shal it se with youre eye
That I wol done a maistrye or I go.
¶ Ye sir qō the prest and wol ye so
Nay therof I pray you hertely.
¶ At your commaundement sir truely
(Qō the chanon and elis god forbede
Lo how this theef couthe his seruice bede
Full sothe it is that suche profered seruyse
Stynketh, as witnesseth the olde wyse
And that ful sone I wol it verifye
In this chanon, rote of al trecherye
That euermore delyte hath and gladnesse
Such fēdely thoughtes in his herte impresse
How Cristes people he may to mischefe bring
God kepe vs from his false dissimulyng.
¶ What wist this prest wt whom ỹ he delt
Ne of his harme comyng nothyng he felte
O sely prest, O sely innocent
With coueityse anon thou shalte be blente
O graceles, ful blynd is thy conceite
Nothyng art thou ware of his deceyte
Which that this fere hath shapen to the
Thy wyfe wenches thou maist not fle
Wherfore to goto the conclusion
That referreth to thy confusyon
Vnhappy man, anon I wol me hye
To tell thyne vnwytte ne thy folye
And eke the falsnesse of that other wretche
As ferforth as my conyng wol streche
¶ This chanon was my lorde ye wold wene
Oure host in sayth, and by the heuen quene
It was another chanon, and not he
That can an hundred folde more subtelte
He hath betrayed folke many a tyme
Of his falsnesse it doleth me to tyme
Euer whan I speke of his falsehed
For shame of him, my chekes waxen red
Algates they begynnen for to glowe

For

For rednesse haue I none, right wel I know
In my visage, for lames dyuerce
Of metals, which ye haue herde me reherce
Consumed and wasted hath my rednesse
Now take hede of this chanons cursednesse.
Sir (qõ he) to the priest, let your man gon
For quicksyluer, that we it had anon
And let him bring vnces two or three
And whan he cometh, as fast shul ye se
A wonder thing, which ye saw neuer er this
Sir (qõ the priest) it shal be done twys
He bad his seruaunt fetche him this thing
And he al redy was at his byddyng
And went him forth, and came anon agayne
With this quicke syluer, shortly for to sayne
And toke these vnces three to the chanoun
And he hem layde wel and fayre adoun
And bad the seruaunt coles for to bring
That he anon might go to his werkyng.
¶ The coles right anon were yfet
And this chanon toke out a crosselet
Of his bosome, and shewed it to the priest
This instrument (qõ he) which ỳ thou seest
Take in thy honde, and put thy selfe therin
Of this quicksyluer an vnce and begyn
In the name of Christ to werke a philosopher
There be ful fewe, whiche I wolde it prefer
So shewe hem so muche of my science,
For here shul ye se by experience
That this quicksyluer I will mortifye
Right in your syght anon withouten lye
And make it as good syluer and as fyne
As there is any in your purse or myne
Or els where, and make it malliable
And els holde me falce and vnstable
Amonges folke euer to appere.
¶ I haue a poudre, that cost me dere
Shal make al good, for it is cause of all
My conuyng, which I you shewe shall
Anoynt your man, and let him be therout
And shet the doze, whyles we ben about
Our priuetie, that no man vs espye
Whyles that we werken in our philosophye.
Was he bad, fulfylled was in dede
This yike seruaunt anon out yede
And hys maister shet the doze anon
And to her labour spedily they gon
This priest at this cursed chanons byddyng
Upon the fyre anon set this thing
And blewe the fyre, and besyed him ful faste
And this chanon into this crosselet caste
A poudre, I not wherof it was
Ymade, eyther of chalke, erthe, or glasse
Or somwhat els, was not worthe a flye
To blynde with this priest, and bad him hye
These coles for to couchen all aboue
The crosselet, for in token that I the loue
(Quod this chanon thyn hondes two
Shal werke al thing that here shal be do.
Graut mercy qõ the priest & was full glad
And couched coles, as the chanon bad
And whyle he besy was, this fendly wretche
This falce chanon the foule fende him fetche
Out of his bosome toke a bechen cole
In whiche ful subtelly was made an hole
And therin was put of syluer limayle
An vnce, and stopped was without fayle
The hole with wax, to kepe the limayle in
And vnderstanderh that this falce gyn
Was not made ther, but it was made before
And other thinges that I shall you tell more
Herafter, which that he with him brought
Er he came there, to begyle him he thought
And so he dyd, for they went a twynne
Tyl he had turned him, could he not blynne
It dulleth me, whan that I of him speke
On his falsehede, fayne wolde I me wreke
If I wyst how, but he is here and there
He is so variaunt, he byderh no where.
¶ But taketh hede nowe for gods loue
He toke his cole, of whiche I spake aboue
And in his honde he bare it priuely
And whyles the priest couched besily
The coles, as I tolde you er this
This chanon sayd, fende ye done amys
This is not couched as it ought to be
But soone I shall amende it (quod he)
Now let me medle ther with but a while
For of you haue I pyte by saint Gyle
Ye ben ryght hotte, I se well howe ye swete
Haue here a clothe and wype away the wete
And whyle the priest him wiped bare
This chanon toke the cole, I shrewe his face
And layde it abouen apon the mydwarde
Of the crosselet, and blewe well afterwarde
Tyl that the coles gon fast brenne.
¶ Now reue vs drinke, qõ this chanon thenne
As ryght as all shal be wel I vndertake
Set we downe, and let vs merry make
And whan this chanons beschen cole
Was brent al, the limayle out of the hole
Into the crosselet anon fyl adoun
And so it must nedes [illegible]
Seems it so euen aboue [illegible]
But therof wyste the [illegible]tyng, alas
He demed al the coles lyche goode

For of the sleight, nothing he vnderstode.
And whan this alkamistre saw his tyme
Riseth vp sir priest (qõ he) & stondeth by me
And for I wot wel ynogh haue I none
Goth walketh forth, & bring a chalke stone
For I wol make it of the same shappe
That an ynget is, if I may haue happe
And bryng eke with you a bolle or a panne
Ful of water, and ye shal se thanne
How that our besynesse shal hap & preue
And yet for ye shall haue no mysbeleue
Ne wrong conceit of me in your absence
I wol not ben out of your presence
But go wt you, and come wt you agayne.
The chambre dore, shortly to sayne
They opened & shet, and went forth her wey
And forth with hem they caried the key
And comen ayen withouten any delay
What should I tary al the long day
He toke the chalke, and shope it in the wyse
Of an ynget, as I shall you devyse.
I say he toke out of his own sleue
A peyne of syluer, ywell mote he cheue
Which that was but an vnce of weyght
And caseth hede now of his cursed sleyght
He shope his ynget, in length and in brede
Of the peyne, withouten any drede
So sly ly that the priest it not aspyed
And in his sleue agayne he gan it hyde
And from the fyre toke vp his matere
And into the ynget it put with mery chere
And into the water vessell he it cast
Whan that him lyst, & bad the priest as fast
Loke what there is, put in thin honde & grope
Thou shalt fynde there syluer as I hope
What deuel of hel shuld it els be
Hauing of syluer, syluer is parde.
He put in his honde, and toke vp a peyne
Of syluer fyne, and glad in euery vayne
Was this priest, whan he sawe it was so
Gods blessyng and his mothers also
And al hallowes, haue ye sir chanon
Said this priest, and I her malyson
But and ye vouchsafe to teche me
This noble craft and this subtelte
I wol be yours, in all that euer I may
Qõ the Chanon, yet wol I make assay
The seconde tyme, that ye mowe take hede
And ben expert of this, and in your nede
Another day assay in myn absence
This disciplyne, and this crafty science
Let take another ounce (qõ he) tho
Of quicke syluer, withouten wordes mo
And don therwith, as I haue done er this
With that other, whiche that now syluer is
¶ This priest him besieth in all that he can
To done as this chanon, this cursed man
Commaunded him, and fast blewe the fyre
For to come to the effecte of his desyre
And this chanon, ryght in the mean while
All redy was, this priest eft to begyle
And for a countinaunce in his honde bare
An halowe stycke, take kepe and beware
In thende of which an vnce and no more
Of syluer lymaile put was al before
Asin his cole, and stopped with wexe wel
For to kepen in his lymaile euery dele
And whiles this priest was in his businesse
This chanon with his stycke gan him dresse
To him anon, and his ponder cast in
As he did erst, the deuyl out of his skyn
Him toyne, I pray to god for his falsehede
For he was euer false in thought and dede
And with his stycke, aboue the crosselette
That was ordayned with that false ielte
He styreth the coles, tyl al telent gan
The ware agayne the fyre, as euery man
But he a fole be, wote wel it mote nede
And all that in the hole was, out yede
And into the crosselet hastely it fell
The priest supposed nothyng but well
But besyed him fast, & was wonder fayn
Supposyng nought but trouth, soth to sayne
He was so glad, that I can not expresse
In no manere his mirthe and his gladnesse
And to the chanon he profered eke some
Body and good: ye (qõ the chanon) anone
Tho I be poore, crafty thou shalt me fynde
I warne the yet is there more behynde
Is there any coper here within sayd he
¶ Ye sir (qõ the priest) I trowe there be.
Els go bye some, and that aswythe
Now good sir go forth thy way & hythe.
¶ He wet his way, & with the coper he came
And this chanon in his honde it name
And of that coper wayed out but an vnce
Al to symple is my tonge to pronounce
As to ministre of my wyt the doublenesse
Of this chanon, rote of all cursednesse
He semed fredly, to hem þ knew him nought
But he was fendly, both in werke & thought
It werieth me to tell of his falsenesse
And natheles, yet woll I it expresse
To the entent that men may bewaare thereby
And for none other cause truely.
¶ He put this vnce of coper into þ crosselet

And

nd on the fire as swythe he hath it set
nd cast in pouder, & made the priest to blow
nd in his wo3kyng fo3 to stoupe low
s he did erste, and al nas but a tape
ight as him lyst, the priest he made his ape
nd afterwarde in the yngot he it caste
nd in the panne put it at the laste
f water, and in he put his own honde
nd in his sleue, as ye byfore honde
erd me tel, he had a sylver teyne
e slyly toke it out, this cursed heyne
unwityng this priest of his false crafte
nd in the pannes botome he hath it lafte
nd in the water rombleth to and fro
nd wonder priuely toke vp also
he coper teyne, not knowyng this priest
nd hyd it, and hent him by the breit
nd to him spake, & thus said in his game
stoupeth adowne, by god ye be to blame
elpeth me now, as I dyd you whylere
ut in your honde, and loketh what is there.
This priest toke vp this sylver teyne anon
nd than sayd the chanon, let vs gon
ith these thre teynes, which we hā wrought
o some goldsmyth, and wete if it be ought
o3 by my fayth, I nold fo3 my hoode
ut if it were sylver fyne and goode
nd that as swythe proued shal be.
Unto ỳ Goldsmyth, with these teynes thre
hey went, and put them in assaye
o fyre and hāmer, might no man say nay
ut they were as them ought fo3 to be.
his sotted priest, who was gladder thā he
as neuer bryde gladder ayenst the day
e nightyngale, ayenst the sesou of May
as neuer none, that lyst better to synge
e lady lustier in carollynge
nd fo3 to speke of loue and womanhede
e knyght in armes, to don a hardy dede
o stonden in grace of his lady dere
han had this priest, this craft to lere
nd to ỳ chanon, thus he spake, and sayd
o3 the loue of god, that fo3 vs all deyd
nd as I maye deserue it vnto you
hat shal this receit cost, telleth me nowe
By our lady (qō this chanon) it is dere
I warne you wel, saue I and a frere
n Englande, there can no man it make.
Noforce (qō he) now sir fo3 gods sake
hat shal I pay, tel me I you pray.
Iwis (qō he) it is ful dere I say
Sy3 at one worde, if that ye lyst it haue
Ye shal paye fourty pounde, so god me saue
And nere the frendshyp that ye did er this
To me, ye shulde pay moze twys.
This priest ỳ sume of fourty pounde anon
Of nobles fet, and tolde hem euerychon
To this chanon, fo3 this like receyte
Al his worching was fraude and disceyte.
Sir priest he said, I kepe fo3 to haue no loos
Of my crafte, fo3 I wold it were kept cloos
And as you loue me, kepeth it secre
Fo3 and men know al my subtelte
By god men wolde haue so great envye
To me, bycause of my philosophye
I shuld be deed, there were non other way
God it forbid qō the priest what ye say
Yet had I leuer spende all the good
Which that I haue, and els were I wood
Than that ye shuld fallen in such mischefe
Fo3 your good will haue ye right good prefe
(Qō the chanon and fare wel graunt mercy
he went his way, & neuer the priest him sey
After that day: & whan that this priest shuld
Maken assay, at suche tyme as he wold
Of this receite, farwel it nolde not be
Lo thus beiaped and begyled was he
Thus maketh he his introduction
To bring folke to her distruction.
Considereth sirs, howe in eche estate
Bee wyse men and gold is debate
So ferforth, that vnnethes there is none
This moultiplyeng blyndeth so many one
That in good fayth, I trowe that it be
The grettest cause of such scarsite
These philosophers speken so mistyly
In this crafte, that men can not come therby
Fo3 any wyt that men haue nowe a dayes
They may wel chatter as dooth the chauges
And in her termes, set her lust and payne
But to her purpose shul they neuer attayne
A man may lyghtly lerne, if he haue ought
To multiplye, and bring his good to nought
Lo, suche a lucre is in this lusty game
A mans wyth it wol turne all to grame
And empten also great and heuy purses
And maken folke to purchase curses
Of hem that han also her good ylente
O fye fo3 shame, they that han be brente
Alas, can not they flye the fyres here
Ye that it vsen, I rede that ye it lere
Lest ỳ ye lesen al, fo3 better than neuer is late
Neuer to thriue, were to long a date
Though ỳ ye prolle aye, ye shal it neuer fynd
Ye ben as bolde as is bayard the blynd
That blondereth forth, & peril casteth he none

He is as bolde to renne ayenst a stone
As for to go beside in the way
So faren ye, that multiplyen I say
If that your eyen cannot sene a right
Loketh that your mynde lacke not his syght
For though ye loke neuer so brode & stare
Ye shal not wynne a myte in that chaffare
But wast al that ye may rape and renne
Withdrawe the fyre, leste it to faste brenne
Medleth with that arte no more I mene
For if ye done, your thrift is gon ful clene
And right as swythe I wol you tellen here
What ỳ the philosophers sain in this matere
¶ Lo thus saith Arnolde of the newe toun
As his rosarye maketh mencyoun
He sayth right thus, withouten any lye
There may no man Mercurye mortifye
But if it be with his brothers knowlegyng
Lo howe that he, which first sayd this thing
Of Philosophers father was, Hermes
He sayth howe the dragon doutles
Ne dyeth not, but if he be slayne
With his brother: And this is for to sayne
By the dragon Mercury, and none other
He understode ỳ brimstone was his brother
That out of Sol and Luna were ydrawe
And therfore sayd he, take hede to my sawe
Let no man besye him this arte for to seche
But he that the entencion and speche
Of philosophers understonde can
And if he do, he is a leude man
For this science, and this conning (qõ he)
Is of the secre of the secres parde.
¶ Also there was a disciple of Plato
That on a tyme sayd his maister to
As his boke Senior wol bere witnesse
And this was his demaunde in sothfastnesse
Tell me the name of the pryuy stone.
¶ And Plato answerd vnto him anone
Take the stone that Tyranos men name.
¶ Which is ỳ qõ he Magnatia is the same
Sayd Plato: ye sir and is it thus?
This is ignotum per ignotius
What is magnatia, good sir I you pray.
¶ It is a water that is made I say
Of elementes foure (quod Plato)
¶ Tel me the roche good sir (qõ he tho)
Of that water, if it be your wyll.
Nay nay qõ Plato certayne that I nyll
The Philosophers were ysworne echone
That they shuld discouer it vnto none
Ne in no boke it write in no manere
For vnto Christ it is so lefe and dere
That he wol not that it discouered be
But where it lyketh to his deite
Man to enspire and eke for to defende
Whan that him lyketh, lo this is his ende.
Thã cõclude I thus, sens ỳ god of heuen
Ne wyll not that the philosophers nemen
How that a man shal come vnto this stone
I rede as for the beste, let it gone
For who so maketh god his aduersarye
As for to werche any thing in contrarye
Vnto his wyl, certes neuer shal he thriue
Though that he multeplye terme of his lyue
And there a poynte, for ended is my tale
God sende euery true man bote of his bale.

¶ Here endethe the tale of the chanons yeman, and here folowyth the doctour of phisykes prologue.

Whan this yeman hys tale ended had
Of this false chanon, which
was so bad
Our host gan say, truely
certayne
This preest was begyled, forth for to sayne
He wenyng for to be a phylosopher
Tyl he right no golde left in his cofer
And forthly this preest had all ther iape
This cursed chanon put in his hoode an ape
But al this passe I ouer as now
Sir doctur of phisicke, yet I pray you
Tel vs a tale of some honest matere
It shal be done, if that ye wol it here
Said this doctour, & his tale bygan anon
Now good mẽ (qõ he) herkeneth euerichon

¶ Here endeth the doctour of phy-
sikes prologue, and here be-
gynneth his tale.

Here was, as telleth
Tytus Liuius
A knyght, ỳ cleped was
Virginius
Fulfylled of honour and
of worthynesse
And strong of frendes, &
of rychesse.
A doughter he had by his wyfe
And neuer had he mo in all his lyfe
Fayre was this mayde in excellent beaute

About

Aboue euery wight that man may se
For nature hath, with soueraine deligence
Formed her in so great excellence
As though she woulde say, lo I nature
Thus can I forme and paynte a creature
Whan that me lyste, who can me counterfete
Pigmalió not, though he alway forge & bete
Or graue or paynte, for I dare well sayne
Appelles, or zeuris, shoulde werche in vayne
To graue or paynte, or forge or bete
If they presumed me to counterfete
For he that is the fourmer principal
Hath made me his vicar generall
To fourme and paynte erthly creaturis
Right as me lyste, for al thinge in my cure is
Vnder the moone, that may wane & waxe
And for my werke, nothyng wol I axe
My lorde and I ben fully of acorde
I made her to the worshyp of my lorde
So do I all myn other creatures
Of what colour they be, or of what figures
Thus semeth me that nature woulde say.

This mayde was of age .xii. yere & tway
In which that nature hath suche delyte
For right as she can paynt a lilye whyte
And rody as rose, right with suche paynture
She paynted hath this noble creature
Er she was borne, vpon her lymmes fre
Were als brighte as suche colours shulde be
And Phebus died had her tresses grete
Lyke to the stremes of his burned hete
And yf that excellent were her beaute
A thousande folde more vertuous was she
In her ne lacketh no condicion
That is to preyse, as by discrecion
As wel in body as in gosse, chaste was she
For which she floured in virginite
With all humilyte and abstynence
With al attemperaunce, and patience
With mesure eke, and berying of aray
Discrete she was in answerying alway
Tho she were wyse as Pallas, dare I sayne
(Her facunde eke, full womanly and playne)
No counterfetted termes had she
To seme wyse: but after her degre
She spake, and all her wordes more & lesse
Sowning in vertue and in gentylnesse
Shamefast she was, & maydes shamfastnesse
Constant in hert, and euer in busynesse
To dryue her out of all slogardye
Bacchus had of her mouthe no mastrye
For wyne and youth done Venus encrece
As men in fyre wol casten oyle or grece
And of her owne vertue vnconstrayned
She hath ful ofte her sicke playned
For that she woulde flye the company
Where lykely was to treten of foly
As is at festes, at reuels, and at daunces
That ben occasions of daly raunces
Suche thynges maken children for to be
To sone rype and bolde, as men may se
Which is full perylous, and hath ben yore
For al to sone may she lerne lore
Of boldenesse, when she is a wyfe.

And ye maistresses in your olde lyfe
That lordes doughters han in gouernaunce
Ne taketh of my worde no displesaunce
Thinke that ye ben set in governynges
Of lordes doughters, onely for two thinges
Eyther for you han kepte your honestie
Eyther ye han fall in freelte
And knowen well ynough the olde daunce
And conne forsake fully mischaunce
For euermore, therfore for Christes sake
Kepeth wel tho that ye vndertake.
¶ Thefe of benesoun that hath forlafte
Hys lykerousnesse and al his theues crafte
Can kepe a forest beste of any man
Nowe kepeth hem wel, for & ye wol ye can
Loketh wel, to no vice that ye assent
Lest ye be dampned for your cursed entent
For who so dothe, a traytour is certayn
And taketh kepe of that I shall you sayn
Of al treyson soueraine pestylence
Is, when a wight betrayeth innocence
Ye fathers, and eke ye mothers also
Though ye han children, be it one or mo
Yours is the charge of al her surueraunce
Whyles they ben in your gouernaunce
Beth ware, that by ensample of youre liuing
Other by your negligence in chastising
That they ne perysshe: for I dare wel say
If that they don, ye shall ful sore abay
Vnder a shepherde softe and negligent
The wolf hath many a shepe & lambe to rent
Sufficeth one ensample nowe as here
For I more turne ayen to my matere.
¶ This maid of which I tel my tale expresse
She kepte her selue, she neded no maistresse
For in her liuyng maydens myght rede
As in a boke, euery good worke and dede
That longeth to a mayde vertuous
She was so prudent and so bountevous
For which our spronge on euery syde
Vnto of her beaute and of her bounte wyde
That thorow ye londe they preysed her echon

That loued vertue, saue enuy alone
That sory is of other mennes wele
And gladde is of her sorowe, and vnhele
The doctour maketh this discripcion
This mayde went on a day into the toun
Toward the temple, with her mother dere
As is of yonge maydens the maniere.
¶ Nowe was there a iustice in the toun
That gouernour was of that regyon
And so befel, this Justice his eyen cast
Upon this mayde, auisynge her ful fast
As she came forby, ther as the Judge stode
Anon his hert chaunged and his mode
So was he caught vp beaute of this mayde
And to him selfe ful prively he sayde
This mayde shal be myn for any man
Anon the fende into hys hert ran
And taught him sodaynly, by what sleight
The mayde to his purpose wynne he might
For certes, by no force, ne by no mede
Him thought he was not able for to spede
For she was stronge of frendes, and eke she
Confermed was in suche souerayne beaute
That wel he wist he might her neuer winne
As for to make her with her body synne
For which with great deliberacion
He sent after a clyent into the toun
The whiche he knewe ful subtyll & ful bolde
This iudge vnto this clerk his tale hath tolde
In secrete wise, and made him to ensure
He shulde tell it vnto no creature
And if he dyd, he shoulde lese his hede
When assented was this cursed rede
Glad was the iudge, and made good chere
And yaue hym gyftes precious and dere.
¶ When shapen was al this conspiracie
Fro poynt to poynt, howe that his lecherie
Parfourmed shoulde be full subtelly
As ye shullen after here openly
Home gothe this clyent ỳ hight Claudius
This false iudge, that hyght Appius
So was his name, for it is no fable
But knowen for an historiall thing notable
The sentence of it sothe is out of dout
This false iudge gothe now fast about
To hasten his delyte, al that he may
And so befell, that sone after on a day
This false iudge, as telleth vs the storie
As he was wonte, sate in his consistorie
And yaue his domes vpon sondrye caas
This false clyent came forth a ful gret paas
And sayd lorde, if it be your wyll
Is doth me right vpon this pytous byll
In whiche I playne vpon Virginius
And if he wol say it is not thus
I wol proue it, and fynde good witnesse
That sothe is, that my byll woll expresse
¶ The iudge answerd, of this in his absens
I may not yeue diffynitif sentence
Let do hym call, and I woll gladly here
Thou shalt haue right, and no wronge here
¶ Virginius came to wete the iudges wyll
And right anon was radde this cursed byll
The sentence of it, was as ye shall here.
¶ To you my lorde Appius so dere
Sheweth your poore seruaunt Claudius
Howe that a knyght called Virginius
Ayenst the lawe, and ayenst al equite
Holdeth expresse ayenst the wyll of me
My seruaunt, which that is my thral by right
Which from min hous was stolen on a night
Whyles she was full yonge, I wol it prime
By witnesse lorde, so that ye you not greue
She is not his doughter, what so he say
Wherfore my lorde iustice I you pray
Yelde me my thrall, if it be your wyll
Lo thys was al the sentence of that byll.
¶ Virginius gan vpon the clyent beholde
But hastely, er he hys tale tolde
He wold haue defended it, as shulde a knight
And by witnesse of many a trewe wight
That all was false, that said his aduersary
Thys cursed iudge wolde no lenger tary
Ne here a worde more of Virginius
But yaue hys iudgement, and sayd thus.
¶ I deme anon this clerk his seruaunt haue
Thou shalt no lenger her in thyn house saue
Go bring her forth, & put her in our warde
This clerk shal haue his thral, thus I award
¶ And when this worthy knight Virginius
Through the assent of the iudge Appius
Must by force hys dere doughter yeuen
Unto the iudge, in lechery to lyuen
He gothe hym home, & set hym in hys hall
And lette anon his dere doughter call
And with face deed as asshen colde
Upon her humble face he gan beholde
With fathers pite, sticking through his hert
Al wolde he not from his purpose conuert.
¶ Doughter (qd he) Virginia by thy name
There ben two wayes, either deth or shame
That thou muste suffer, alas ỳ I was borne
For neuer thou deseruedest wherfore
To dyen, with a swerde or with a knyfe
Oh dere doughter, comfort of my lyfe
Which I haue fostred vp with such plesaūce

That

That thou ne were out of my remembraunce
O doughter, which that art my last wo
And in my life my last ioye also
O lemme of chastite, in pacience
Take thou thy dethe, this is my sentence
For loue and not for hate thou muste be deed
My pitous honde more smyte of thyne heed
Als that euer Appius the fey
Thus hath he falsely iudged the to dey
And tolde her all the case, as ye before
han herd, it nedeth not to tell it more.
¶ O mercy dere father (qõ this mayde)
And with that word, both her armes layde
Aboute his necke, as she was wonte to do
The teres braste out of her eyen two
And sayd, O good father shall I dye
Is there no grace, is there no remedye
¶ No certes dere doughter myne (qõ he)
Than yeue me leaue father mine (qõ she)
My deth to complayne a lytel space
For pardè, I epte yaue his doughter grace
For to complayne, er he her slough, alas
And god it wot, nothing was her trespas
But that she ranne her father first to se
To welcome him, with great solempnite
And with that word she fel a swoune anon
And after, whan her swouning was gon
She riseth vp, and to her father saide
Blessed be god that I shall dye a mayde
Yeue me my deth, er that I haue a shame
Doth th your child your will a gods name
And w that word, she prayeth him ful ofte
That with his swerd he shuld smit her softe
And w that word, a swoune downe she fell
Her father, with sorowful hert and fell
Her heed of smote, and by the toppe it hente
And to the iudge he it yaue in presente
As he sat in dome in consistorie.
When the iudge it sawe, as saith ꝑ storie
He bad take him, and honge him also fast
But right anon al the people in thrast
To saue the knight, for routh and for pyte,
For knowen was the iudges iniquite
The people anon had suspecte in this thing
By maner of this diuentes chalengyng
That it was by the assent of Appius
They wyst wel that he was lecherous
For which vnto Appius they gon
And kesten him in prison right anon
Where as he slowe him selfe, and Claudius
That seruaunt was vnto this Appius
Was demed for to be honged vpon a tre
But Virginius, of his great pyte
So prayed for him, that he was exiled
And els certes he had ben begyled
The remnaunt were honged, more and lesse
That consented were to thys cursydnesse.
¶ Here may men se how sin hath his merite
Beware, for no mã wot how god wol smite
In no degre, ne in no maner wyse
The wo. . . of conscience wol aryse
Of wicked lyfe, though it so priuy be
That no man wote of it but god and he
Whether he be leude man or lerd
He not howe sone he may ben afferd
Therfore I rede you thys counsayle take
Forsake synne, or synne you forsake

¶ Here endeth the doctour of phi-
sykes tale, and foloweth the
wordes of the hoste.

Our hoste gan swere, as he were wode
Harowe (qõ he) by nayles and by blode
Thys was a falsse theef, and a cursed iustice
As shamefull dethe, as herte may deuise
Come to the iustice and her aduocas
Algate this sely mayden is slayne, alas
Alas to dere abought she her beaute
Wherfore I say, that all men may se
That yeftes of fortune, or of nature
Ben cause of dethe of many creature
Her beaute was her dethe, I dare wel sayne
Alas so pytously as she was slayne
But herof wol I not procede as nowe
Ben haue full ofte more harme than prowe
But truely myn owne maister dere
Thys is a pitous tale for to here
But natheless, passe ouer is no force
I pray to god to saue thy gentle corse
And thy vrinalles, and thy iordanes
Thyn ypocras, and eke thy galyanes
And euery boyst full of letuarye
God blesse hem and our lady saint Marye
So mote I the thou art a proper man
And lyke a prelate by saint Runyan
Saue that I can not speke wel in termine
But wel I wote, thou dost mistrest to termine
That I haue almost caught a cardyacle
By corpus domini, but I haue triacle
Or els a draught of moyste corny ale
Or but I here anon a mother merye tale
Myn herte is lost, for pyte of this mayde
Thou belame, thou Iohn pardoner he sayde
Tell vs some merye tale, or iape, right anon.
It shal be don (qõ he) by saint Runion

But

But first (qõ he) here at this ale stake
I will dotbe drinke, and eate of a cake
But right anone, these gentils gon to crye
Nay, let hym tell vs of no rebaudrye
Tell vs som mortal thyng, that we mow lere
Some witte, and than wol we gladly here
I graunte (qõ he) ywys, but I moste thinke
On some honest thyng, whiles y I drinke.

¶ Here endeth the wordes of the host, and here folowyth the prologue of the Pardoner.

LOrdynges (qõ he) in chyrche when I preche
I payne me to haue an hautein speche
And ring it out, as rounde as doth a bell
For I can all by rote, that I tell
My tetme is alwaye, and ever was
(Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas)
First I pronounce fro whens I come
And then my bulles I shewe al and some
Our liege lordes seale on my patent
That shewe I first, my body to warrent
That no man be so bolde, prest ne clerke
Me to disturbe, of Christes holy werke
And after that, I tell forth my tales
Bulles of Popes, and of Cardynales
Of Patriarkes, and of Bysshopes I shewe
And in latyn I spekе wordes a fewe
To saffre with my predicacion
And for to stere men to devocion
Than shewe I forth my long christal stones
Y cramined ful of clouts and of bones
Relykes they ben, as wente they echone
Than haue I in laton a shoder bone
Which that was of an holy lewes shepe.
Good men say I, take of my wordes kepe
If that this bone be washen in any wel
If cowe or calfe, shepe, or oxe swel
That any worme hath eten, or beste stonge
Take water of this wel, and wash his tonge
And it is hole anon: and furthermore
Of pockes, and of scabbes, and every sore
Shall shepe be hole, that of thys wel
Drinketh a draught, take kepe of that I tell.
¶ If the good man that beestes oweth
Wol every day, er the cocke croweth
Fastyng drinke of thys wel a draught
As thyrke holy lewe our elders taught
His beestes and hys store shall multyply
And sirs, also it healeth jelosye
For though a man be fall in jelous rage
Let make with this water his potage
And never shall he more his wife mistryst
Though he in soth the defaute by her wyst
Al had she take prestes two or thre
¶ Here is a mytayne eke, that ye may se
He that his hande wol put in this mytayne
He shal haue multiplying of his grayne
When he hath sowen, be it whete or otes
So that he offer good pens or grotes.
And men & women, one thing I warne you
If any wight ben in this churche nowe
That hath done synne horrible, that he
Dare not for shame of it shriven be
Or any woman, be she yonge or olde
That hath made her husbond cokewolde
Such folke shul haue no power ne no grace
To offer to my relykes in this place
And who so fyndeth him out of suche blame
Commeth up and offre in goddes name
And I assoyle him by the auctorite
Such as by bulle was graunted to me.
¶ By this gaude haue I wonne every yere
An hundred marke, sythen I was pardoner
I stonde lyke a clerke in my pulpet
And the lewde people ben downe yset
I preche so as ye haue herd here before
And telle an hundred tales more
Than payne I me to stretche forth my necke
And est and west, upon the people I becke
As doth a doue, sytting upon a berne
Myn hondes and my tonge gon full yerne
That it is joy to se my busynesse
Of auarice, and of suche cursednesse
Is myn preching is for to make them free
To geven her pens, and namely unto me
For myn entent is not but for to wynne
And nothyng for correction of synne
I recke never whan that they ben beryed
Though her soule gon a blackberyed
For certes many a predycacion
Cometh oft tyme of yvel entencion.
¶ Some for pleasaunce of folke, & for flatery
To ben auaunced by hipocrysy
And some for vayne glory, and some for hate
For whan I dare not other wayes debate
Than wol I stynge hem with my tonge smerte
In preching, so that he shal not asterte
To ben defamed falsely, if that he
Hath trespased to my brotherne or to me
For though I tell not his propre name
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same

xv

by sygnes, or by other circumstaunces
This quite I folke, ỳ doth vs displesaunces
Thus put I out my venym vnder hewe
Of holynesse, to semen holy and trewe
But shortly myn entent I wol devyse
I preche of nothyng but of coveityse
Therfore my texte is yet, and euer was
Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas
Thus can I preache ayenst the same vyce
Which that I vse, and that is avarice
But though my selfe be gilty in that synne
Yet can I maken other folke to twynne
From avarice, and sore hem to repent
But that is not my principall entent
I preche nothyng but for coveityse
Of this matere, it ought ynoughe suffise.
Than tell I hem ensamples many one
Of olde stories, longe tyme agone
For lewde people louen tales olde
Which thinges they can well report & holde
What trowe ye whyles that I may preche
And wynne gold and syluer for to teche
That I wol lyve in poverte wilfully
Nay nay, I thought it never trewly
For I wol preche and begge in sondrie landes
I wol not do no labour with myn handes
Ne make baskettes and lyve therby
Bycause I wol not begge idelly
I wol none of the apostles counterfete
I wol have money, mault, chese, & whete
Al were it yeven of the poorest page
Or of the poorest wyddow in a village
Though hir children shulde sterue for famyne
Nay, I wol drinke the lycoure of the vyne
And have a lyf wenche in euery toun
But herkeneth lordynges in conclusyoun
Your lyking is that I shulde tel a tale
Now I have dronken a draught of corny ale
By god I hope I shall tel you a thyng
That shall by reason ben at your lyking
For though my selfe be a full vycious man
A moral tale yet I you tel can
Which I am wont to preche, for to wynne
Now holde your peace, my tale I wol begin.

Here endeth the pardoners prologue, and here foloweth his tale.

In Flaunders whylom there was a company
Of yonge folke, that haunted folyly
As harlard, ryot, fleshe, and tavernes
Where as with harpes, lutes, & gyternes
They daunce & playen at dyce nyght & day
And eten also, ouer that hir myght may
Through which they don the deuil sacrifice
Within the deuyls temple, in cursed wise
By superfluite abhominable
Hir othes ben so great and so damnable
That it is grisly for to here hem swere
Our blessed lordes body they al to tere
Hem thought Iewes rent hym not ynough
And eche of hem at others synne lough.
And right anon comen in tombesteres
Fetis and smale and yonge fayteres
Syngers with harpes, baudes, & wafereres
Which that ben verely the deuils officers
To kyndle and blowe the fyre of lechery
That is annexed vnto glotony
The holy writte take I to my witnesse
That lechery is in wyne and dronkennesse.
Lo how that dronken Lothe vnkindely
Lay by his doughters two vnwetingly
So dronke he was, he nist what he wrought
And therfore sore repent hym ought
Herodes, who so wol the storie rede
Ther may he lerne, & by ensample se
How he of wyne was replete at his fede
Right at his owene table, yaue his hede
To slen Johan the Baptiste ful gyltelle
Senecke sayth eke good wordes doutelle
He sayth he can no difference fynde
Betwixt a man that is out of his mynde
And a man that is dronkelewe
But wodnesse that is fallen in a shrewe
Persyuereth lenger than doth dronkennesse
O glotony, ful of cursydnesse
O cause first of our confusion
O originall of our damnacion
Vyl Christ had bought vs vp his blode agayn
Lo howe dere, shortly for to sayn
Bought was first this cursyd vylanye
Corrupt was al this world through glotonye
Adam our fourn father, and his wife also
Fro paradyse, to labour and to wo
Were dryuen for that vyce, it is no drede
For whyles that Adam fasted, as I rede
He was in paradyse, and when that he

Here

Ete of the frute, defended on the tre
Anon he was out cast to wo and payne
O glotonye, on the wel ought vs to playne.
¶ Oh, wyst a man howe many maladies
Foloweth of excesse and of glotonyes
He wolde ben the more mesurable
Of hys dyete, sittyng at hys table
Alas the shorte throte, the tendre mouthe
Maketh that est, & west, north, and southe
In erth, in eyre, in water, men to swynke
To gete a gloton deynte meate and drinke
Of thys mater, o Paule wel canst thou trete
Meate vnto wombe, & wombe eke vnto mete
Shall god distroy bothe as Paule sayth
Alas, a foule thyng it is by my fayth
To say thys wordes, and fouler is the dede
Whan men so drinketh of the white and rede
That of hys throte he maketh hys privey
Through thylke cursed superfluite.
¶ The apostle sayeth, weping ful pitously
There walken many, of which tolde haue I
I say it nowe weping with pytous voyce
There ben enemies of Christes croyce
Of which the end is deth, wombe is her god.
O belly, O wombe, O stynkyng cod
Fulfylled of donge and of corrupcion
At either ende of the foule is the soun
Howe great coste and labour is to fynde
Thise cokes how they stamp, streine, & grinde
And turne substaunce in to accident
To fulfyl all thy lykerous talent
Out of the harde bones knocken they
The mary, for they caste it not awey
That may go through the gullet safe & softe
Of spycerye, of leues, barke, and rote
Shall ben hys sauce ymade by deyte
To maken hym haue a newer apetyte
But certes he that haunteth suche delytes
Is deed, whiles that he lyueth in the vices
¶ A lecherouse thing is wine and dronkenesse
It is ful of stryuyng and of wretchydnesse
Oh dronken man, disfygured is thy face
Sowr is thy breethe, foule art ꝺ to embrace
And through thy dronken nose soweth ꝑ soun
As tho ꝑ saydest aye, Sampson Sampson
And yet god wot Sampson dronke neuer wine
Thou fallest, as it were a stycked swyne
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure
For dronkennesse is very sepulture
Of mannes witte, and his discrecion
In whom that drinke hath dominacion
He can no counsayle kepe, it is no drede
Nowe kepe you fro the white & fro the rede
Namely fro the white wyne of Lepe
That is to sel in Fisshe strete and in Chepe
This wyne of Spayne crepeth subtelly
In other wynes growyng faste by
Of whiche ryseth suche fumositee
That when a man hath dronke draughtes thre
And weneth that he be at home in Chepe
He is in Spayne, right at the towne of Lepe
Nought at Rochel, ne at Burdeaux toun
And thus wol he say, Sampsoun Sampsoun
But herkeneth lordinges o word, I you preye
That al the souerayne actes, dare I saye
Of victories in the olde testament
That thorow very god, that is omnipotent
Were don in abstynence and in prayere
Loketh the byble, and there ye mowe it lere.
Loketh Attyla, the great conquerour
Deyed in his sleepe, with shame and dishonour
Bledyng aye at his nose in dronkennesse
A captayne shulde lyue in sobernesse.
And ouer al thys, auyse you right wel
What was comaunded vnto Lamuel:
Nat Samuel: but Lamuel saye I
Redeth the byble, and fynderh it expresse
Of wine yeuyng to hem that haue iustice
No more of this, for it may ynough suffice.

And nowe that I haue spoke of glotonye
Now wol I defende you hasardrye
Hasarde is very mother of lesynges
And of deceyte, and cursed forswerynges
Blaspheme of christ, manslaughter, & wast also
Of catayle of tyme, and of other mo
It is reproue, and contrary to honour
For to be holden a comon hasardour
And euer the hyer that he is of estate
The more he is holden desolate
If that a prince vse hasardrye
In all gouernaunce and policye
He is as by comen opynyon
Holde the lesse in reputacyon
Stilbon ꝑ was holde a wise ambassadour
Was sent into Corinth wt ful great honour
Fro Calydone, to maken hem alyaunce
And when he came, happed thys chaunce
That al the greatest that were of ꝑ londe
Playing at hasarde he hem fonde
For whiche, as sone as it might be
He stale hym home ayen to his contre
And sayd, there wol I not lese my name
I wyl not take on me so great defame
For to alye you to none hasardours
Sendeth other wyser embassadours

For

For by my trouth, me were leuer dye
Than I shuld you to hasardours alye
For ye that ben so glorious in honours
Shal not alye you with hasardours
As by my wyl, ne by my treue
This wise philosopher, thus sayd he.
¶ Loke eke howe to kynge Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the boke sayth vs
Sent him a payre of dyce of golde in scorne
For he had vsed hasardrie there byforne
For whiche he held his glory & his renoun
At no value or reputacyoun
Lordes might fynde other maner play
honest ynough to drive the day away.

Now wol I speke of othes false & great
A worde or two, as other bokes entreat
Great swerying is thing abhominable
And false swering is yet more reprouable
The hye god forbad swerying at all
Witnesse of Matheu, but in speciall
Of swering, saith the holy Jeromye
Thou shalt swere sothe thine othes, & not lye
And swere in dome and eke in rightwysnesse
But vyle swerying is a cursednesse.
¶ Beholde and se that in the first table
Of hye gods hestes honourable
How that the seconde heste of him is this
Take not my name in vydelnesse amys
Lo, he rather forbydderh such swering
Than homicide, or any other cursed thing
I say as thus, by order it stondeth
this knoweth they y his hestes vnderstondeth
How that the seconde heste of God is that
And further more, I wol the tel al plat
That vengeaunce shall not part fro his hous
That of his othes is to outragyous
By goddes precious herte, and his nayles
And by the blod of Crist, that is in Hayles
Seuen is my chaunce, and thyn fyue & thre
By goddes armes, if thou falsly play me
This daggar shall thorow thyne herte go
This fruite cometh of thilke bones two
Forswering, ire, falsnesse, and homicyde
Now for the loue of Crist, y for vs dyde
Leaueth your othes, both great and smale
For I shal tel you a meruaylous tale.
¶ These ryottours thre, of which I tell
Longe erste or prime ronge any bell
Were set hem in a tauerne to drinke
And as they sat, they herd a bel clynke
Byfore a cors, y was caried to his graue
That one of hem gan call to his knaue
Go bette (qõ he) and aske redyly
What cors is this, that passeth forth by
And loke that thou reporte his name wele.
¶ Sir, qõ he, it nedeth neuer a dele
It was me told er ye came here two houres
He was parde an olde felowe of yours
And sodaynly was he slayne to nyght
For dronke as he sat on his benche vpright
There came a priuy theefe, men clepen dethe
That in this countray al the people slethe
And with his speare he smote his herte a two
And went his way, withouten wordes mo
He hath a thousande slayne, this pestilence
And maister, er ye come in his presence
Me thinketh that it were necessarye
For to beware of suche an aduersarye
Beth redy for to meten him euermore
Thus taught me my dame, I say no more.
¶ By saint Mary, sayd this tauerner
The childe saith sothe, for he hath this yere
Henne ouer a myle, slayne in a great village
Both man and woman, childe and page
I trowe his habitacion be there
To benaysed, great wysdome it were
Er that he did a man dishonour.
¶ Ye gods armes, qõ this riottour
Is it suche peryl with him for to meete
I shall him seeche by stile and eke by streete
I make a vowe, by goddes digne bones
Herkeneth felowes, we thre ben all ones
Let eche of vs holde vp his honde to other
And eche of vs become others brother
And we wol slee this false traytour dethe
He shall be slayne, that so many sleeth
By goddes dignite, er that it be night
¶ Togyder han these thre her trouthes plight
To lyue and dye eche of them with other
As though he were his owne brother
And vp they sterten all dronken in this rage
And forth they gone, toward that village
Of whiche the tauerner hath spoken before
And many a grisly othe han they swore
And Christes blessed body they to rent
Dethe shalbe deed, and we may him hent.
¶ Whan they han gone not fully a myle
Right as they wold haue troden ouer a style
An olde pore man with hem met
This olde man ful mekely hem gret
And sayd now lordynges god you se.
¶ The proudest of these ryottours thre
Answerd ayen, what chorle with hard grace
Why art thou al forwrapped saue thy face
Why lyuest thou so longe in so great age

¶ This olde man gan loken in his vysage
And said thus: for I can not fynde
A man, though I walked into Inde
Neither in cyte, ne in no village
That wol chaunge his youth for myn age
And therfore mote I haue myne age thyll
As long tyme as it is goddes wyll.
Ne deth alas, nyl not haue my lyfe
Thus walke I lyke a restlesse caityfe
And on the ground, which is my mothers gate
I knocke with my staffe erlyche and late
And say, leue mother let me in
Lo how I vanysshe, flesshe, blode, and skyn
Alas, when shall my bones ben at reste
Mother with you wold I chaunge my cheste
That in my chamber longe tyme hath be
Ye for an heren clout to wrappe in me
But yet to me she wol not done that grace
For which ful welked is my face
But sirs, to you it is no curtesye
To speken vnto an olde man vilanye
But he trespace in worde eyther in dede
In holy writte, ye may your selfe wel rede
Ayenst an olde man, hore vpon his heede
Ye shuld aryse, therfore I you rede
Ne deth vnto an olde man no harme as now
No more than ye wold a man dyd you
In age, if that ye may so long abyde
And god be with you, wherther ye go or ryde
I moste go thider as I haue to go
¶ Nay olde chorle, by god thou shalt not so
Sayd these other hasardours anon
Thou partest not so lyghtly by saint John
Thou spakest right now of thilke traytour deth
That in this contre al our frendes sleth
Haue here my trouth thou art his espye
Tel where he is, or els thou shalt dye
By god and by the holy Sacrament
For sothely thou art of his assent
To slee vs yonge folke, thou falsse theef.
¶ Now sirs, if it be to you so lefe
To fynde deth, turne vp this croked way
For in that grove I lefte him by my fay
Vnder a tree, and there he wol abyde
Ne for your bost he nyl him nothynge hide
See ye yonder oke, right there ye shal him fynde
God saue you, that boughte agen mankynde
And you amende, thus said this olde man.
¶ Thanne ryche of these ryotours ran
Tyl they came to the tree, and there they founde
Florevnes of gold fyne, yeomed rounde
Wel nye a fyften bushels, as hem thought
No lenger than after dethe they sought
But ech of hem so glad was of that syght
For that the florevns so fayre ben and bryght
That downe they syt, by the precyous hoorde
The worste of hem spake the fyrst worde.
¶ Brethern, qd he take kepe what I say
My wyt is great, though I bourde or play
This tresure hath fortune to vs yeuen
In mirthe and ioyfte our lyfe to lyuen
And lyghtly as it cometh, so wol we spende
Hey, goddes precious herte: who wende
To day, that we shuld haue so fayre a grace
But might this gold be caried fro this place
Home to my house, or els to yours
(For wel I wote that al this golde is ours)
Than were we in hye felycite
But trewly by day it may not be
Men wold say, that we were theues strong
And for our owne tresoure don vs honge
This tresour must ycarried be by nyght
As wisly and as slyly as it might
Wherfore I rede, let loke among vs all
To drawe, and let se where the cutte wol fall
And he that hath the shortest cutte, with herte blythe
Shal renne to towne, and that ful swythe
To bryng vs bred and drinke ful prively
And two of vs shall kepe ful subtilly
This tresour wel, and if he wol not tarye
Whan it is nyght, we wol this tresour carye
By one assent, where as vs thynketh best
That one of hem brought grasse in his fist
And bad hem draw, and loke on whom it fall
And it fel on the yongest of hem all
And forth toward the towne he went anone
And also soone as he was gone
That one of hem spake vnto that other
Thou wost wel, thou art my sworne brother
Thy profyte wol I tel the right anone
Thou wost wel that our felow is gone
And here is golde, and that ful great plente
That shal departed be among vs three
But nathelesse, if that I can shape it so
That it departed were among vs two
Had I not done a frendly turne to the
That other answerd, I not how that might be
I wold wel that the gold were ours two
What shuld we do, that it might be so
¶ What if he counsaile (said the fyrst thefe)
And I shall tell the in wordes fewe
What we wol done, and bring it wel about.
¶ I graunt, qd that other out of doute
That by my trouth, I wol the not bewraye
¶ Now qd he thou wost wel we ben two many
And two of vs shall stronger be than one

Loke

Loke whan he is set and than anone
Aryse, as though thou woldest with him play
And I shal ryuen him through ỳ sides tway
Whiles ỳ thou struggelest wt him as in game
And with thy dagger, loke thou do the same
And than shall all the gold departed be
My dere frende, betwyxt the and me
Than may we bothe our lustes fulfyll
And play at dice, right at our owen wyll
And thus accorded ben these shrewes tway
To slee the thirde, as ye herde me say.
This yongest, whiche ỳ went to the towne
Ful often in his hert he rolled vp and downe
The beautie of these florens fayre and bright
O lord, gode if so were that I might
Have al this tresour to my selfe alone
There nys no man, that lyueth vnder trone
Of god, that shuld lyue so mery as I
And at the last the fende our enemy
Put in his thought that he shuld poyson bey
With which he might sleen his felowes twey
For why, the fende fonde him in suche lyuing
That he had leue to sorowe him to bring
For this was verely his entente
To sleen hem both, and neuer to repente.
And forth he goth, no lenger wold he tary
Into the towne, vnto a potecary
And prayde him that he wold him sell
Some poison, that he might his rattes quell
And eke there was a polkat in his hawe
That as he sayd, his capons had yslawe
And sayd, he wold wreken him vpon ỳ he might
Of men, that diffroyed hem by nyght.
The potecary answerd, thou shalt haue
A thing, as wisly god my soule saue
In all this worlde there nys no creature
That eteth or drinketh of this confecture
Not but ỳ mountaunce of a corne of whete
That he ne shall his lyfe anon forlete
Ye sterue he shal, and that in lesse while
Than thou woldest goen a pace, not but a myle
This poison is so strong and so violent.
This cursed man hath in his honde hent
This poyson in a box, and syth he ran
Into the next strete vnto a man
And borowed him large bottels thre
And in the two, the poyson poured he
The thirde he kept clene for his drinke
For all the night he shope him for to swynke
In carying of the golde out of that place
And when this fel theef, with sory grace
Had fylde with him his great bottels thre
To his felowes ayen repayred he.
What nedeth it therof to sermon more
For right as they had cast his deth before
Right so they han him slayne, and that anone
And when this was done, than spake ỳ one
Now let vs syt and drinke, and make vs mery
And afterward we woine his body bury
And after that it happed hem par caas
The one toke the bottel, therin the poyson was
And dronke, and gaue his felow drinke also
Through which anon they storuen both two.
But certes I suppose that Auicenne
Wrote neuer in no canon, ne in no fenne
More wonder sorowes of empoysoning
Than had these wretches two in her ending
Thus ended ben these homicides two
And eke the false empoysonner also.
O cursed synne, ful of al cursednesse
O traytours homicide, O wykednesse
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrie
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vilanye
And othes great, of vsage and of pride
Alas mankynde, how may it betyde
That to thy creatour, which ỳ the wrought
And with his precious blood the bought
Thou art so false and so vnkynde, alas
Now good men, god forgeue you your trespas
And ware you fro ỳ synne of auarice
Vnto his holy pardon, may you all wayche
So that ye offre nobles or sterlynges
Other els syluer spones, broches, or ringes
Bowed your hed vnder this bulle
Cometh vp ye wyues, offreth of your wolle
Your names here I enter in my rolle anon
Into the blysse of heuen shall ye all gon
I you assoyle by myn highe powere
Ye that offren as clene and eke clere
As ye were borne. Lo sirs, thus I preche
And Iesu Crist, that is our soules leche
So graunte you his pardon to receyue
For that is best, I wot you not disceyue
But sirs, one worde forgate I in my tale
I haue relykes, and pardon in my male
As fayre as any man in Englonde
Which were yeuen me by the popes honde
If any of you wol of deuocyon
Offren, and haue myn absolucion
Cometh forth anon, and knelyth here adoun
And mekely receyueth my pardoun
Or elis taketh pardon as ye wende
Al newe and freshe, at euery townes ende
So that ye offren alway newe and newe
Nobles or pens, which ben good and trewe
It is great honour to euery wyche that is here

That ye may haue a sufficient pardonere
To assoyle you, in counere there ye ryde
For auentures, whiche that maye betyde
For peraventure there may fal one or two
Downe of her horse, & breke her necke a two
Loke which surtie it is to you all
That I am in your felowshyp yfall
That may assoyle you both more and lasse
Whan that the sonle shal fro the body passe
I rede that our hoste shal begynne
For he is most enuyolopte of synne
Cometh forth sir host, and offre first anon
And thou shalte kysse the relykes euerychon
Ye for a grote, vnbokyll anon thy purse.
Nay nay (qd he thā haue I chrystes curse
Let be (qd he it shall not be forthethe
Thou woldest make me kisse thin old breche
And swere it were a relyke of a seynt
Though it were with thy foudernēt depeynt
But by ꝑ crosse, which seint Helayne fonde
I wold I had thy coylons in myne honde
Instede of relykes, or of sanctuarye
Let cut hem of, I wol helpe the hem to carye
They shul be shryned in an hogges torde
This pardoner answered not a worde
So wroth he was, he wolde no word say
Now (qd our host) I wol no lenger play
With the, ne with non other angry man.
But right anon the worthy knyght began
Whan that he saw that all the people lought
No more of this, for it is right ynought
Sir pardoner, be merry and glad of chere
And ye sir host, that ben to me so dere
I praye you that ye kysse the pardoner
And pardoner, I praye the drawe the ner
And as we dyd, let vs laughe and play
Anon they kyssed, and ryden forthe her way.

Here endeth the Pardoners tale, and here begynneth ꝑ Shypmans prologue.

Now frendes sayde our hoste so dere
How lyketh you by Johan the Pardonere
He hathe vnbokeled well the male
He hath vs tolde right a thrifty tale
As touching of his mysgouernaunce
I pray to god yeue him good chaunce
As ye han herde, of these cyrcumstaunces
Now gentil mariner, herterly I pray the
Tel vs a good tale, and that right anon
It shal be done, by god & by sayntē Johan
Sayd this maryner, as wel as euer I can
And right anon his tale he thus began.

Here endeth the Shypmans prologue, and here followeth his tale.

A Marchaūt, whilō dwelled at saint Denise
That rich was, for wyde che men held him wyse
A wyfe he had, of excellēt beaute
And compynable, & vertuous was she
Which is a thing that causeth more dispense
Than worth is al the chere and reuerence
That mē hem done, at festes and at dayes
Such salutacions and countynaunces
Passeth, as dothe the shadowe on a wal
But wo is him that paye mote for all
The sely husbonde algate he mote paye
He mote vs bothe cloth and eke arraye
Al for his owne worshyppe, richely
In whiche array we daunce ful lyly
And if that he may not, peraventure
Or elis lust no suche spence endure
But thynketh, that it is wast and lost
Than mote another paye for our coste
And lende vs gold, and that is perilous
This noble Marchant helde a noble hous
For whiche he had al day great repayre
For his largesse, and for his wife was fayre
That wonder is: but herkeneth to my tale
Among al his gestes great and smale.
There was a monke, a fayre man & a bolde
I trowe thurty wynter he was olde
That euer in one, was drawyng to that place
This yonge monke, ꝑ so fayre was of face
Acquaynted was with this good man
Sithens that he first knowlege began
That in his house, as familier was he
As it is possyble any frende to be
And for as muche, as this good man
And eke this monke, of which I began
Were both two borne in one village
The monke him claimed, as for cosynage
And he agayne sayd not ones nay
But was as glad therof, as foule of day
For to his hert it was a great plesaunce
Thus ben they knytte with eternal alyaunce
And

And eke of hem gan other for to ensure
Of brotherhed, whiles her lyfe may dure.
Fre was dam Johan, & namely of dispence
As in that house, and ful of dylygence
To do plesaunce, and eke great costage
He foryate not to yeue the lelle page
In al that house, but after her degre
He yaue the lorde, and sythen his meyne
Whan þ he came, some maner honest thyng
For which they were as glad of his cõmyng
As foule is fayne, whã the sonne vp ryseth
No more herof as nowe, for it sytteth.
¶ But so byfell, this marchaunt on a day
Shope him to make redy his aray
Towarde the towne of Bruges for to fare
To byen there a porcion of ware
For whiche he hath sent to Parys anon
A messenger, and prayde hath dan Jhon
That he shuld come to S. Denys to playne
With him, and wt his wife, a daye or twayne
Or he to Bruges went, in all wise
¶ This noble monke, of which I you deuise
Hath of his abbot, as him lyst licence
Bycause he was a man of hie prudence
And eke an officer, out for to ride
To seen her graunges, and her bernes wyde
And vnto saint Denys he cometh anon.
Who was so welcome, as my lord dã Jhon
Our dere cosyn, ful of curtesye
With him he brought a iubbe of malueysye
And eke another full of fyne vernage
And volatily, as was aye his vsage
And thus I let hem both eate, drinke, & play
This marchãt & this monke, a day or tway.
¶ The third day this marchaunt vp ryseth
And on his nede sadly him auyseth
And vp into his countyng house goth he
To reken with him selfe, as wel may be
Of thilke yere, how it with him stoode
And how he spended had his goode
And if that he encreased were or none
His bokes and his bagges many one
He layth afore him, on his counter borde
Ful riche was his tresour and his horde
For whiche ful fast his counter doore he shet
And eke he nolde no man shulde him let
Of his accomptes, for the mene tyme
And thus he sate tyl it was passed prime.
Dan Johan was ryseu in þ morowe also
And in the garden walked to and fro
And hath his thynges sayd full curtesly.
¶ This good wyfe come walkynge priuely
Into the garden, there he walked soft
And him salueth, as she hath done ful ofte
A mayden childe came in her compayne
Whiche as her list, she may gouerne & gye
For yet vnder the yerde was the mayde.
¶ O dere cosyn dan Johan, she sayde
What eyleth you so rathe to arise?
¶ Nece (quod he) it ought ynough suffise
Fyue houres for to slepen on a nyght
But it were for an olde palled wight
As ben these olde wedded men, þ lye & stare
As in a forme sytteth a wery hare
Al forstraught, with hondes gret & smale
But nece, why loke ye so pale?
I trowe certes, that our good man
Hath you laboured, sith this night began
That you were nede to resten hastely
And with that worde, he lough ful merely
And with his owen thought he wexe all reed.
This fayre wife, gan to shake her heed
And sayd thus, ye god wot al (quod she)
Nay cosyn myn, it standeth not so with me
For by that god that yaue me soule and lyfe
In al the realme of Fraũce, is there no wyfe
That lesse lust hath to that foule play
For I may synge alas, and wela way
That I was borne, but to no wight (quod she)
Dare I not tell, how it stonte with me
Wherfore I thinke out of this world to wende
Or els of my selfe some to make an ende
So full I am of drede and eke of care.
¶ This mõke began vpõ this wife to stare
And sayd alas, nay nece god forbede
That ye for any sorowe, or for any drede
For to your selfe, but telleth me your grefe
Peraduenture I may in your mischefe
Counsayle or helpe, & therfore telleth me
Al your anoye, for it shal secre be
For on my portehose I make an othe
That neuer in my lyfe, for lefe ne lothe
Ne shal I not of no counsayle you bewray.
The same ayen to you (quod she) I say
By god and by this portehose, I you swere
Though men would me al in peces tere
Ne shal I neuer, for to go to hell
Bewray o worde, of thyng that ye me tell
Not for no cosynage, ne for alyaunce
But verely for loue and affyaunce
Thus ben they sworne, and here vpon kysse
And eke of hem tolde other what hem lyste.
¶ Cosyn (quod she) if I had a space
As I haue none, and namely in this place
Than wold I tel a legende of my lyfe
That I suffred haue, sythe I was a wyfe

With myn husbond, though he be your cosyn
Nay (qō this mōke) by god & seynt Martyn
He nys no more cosyn vnto me
Than is this leke, that hongeth on the tre
I clepe him so, by saynte Denys of Fraunce
To haue the more cause of aquayntaunce
Of you, whom I haue loued specyally
Abouen al other women sykerly
This swere I you on my professioun
Telleth your griefe, lest he come adoun
And hasteth you, and goth your way anon.
My dere loue (qō she) O my dan John
Ful lefe me were this counsayle to hyde
But out it mote, it may no lenger abyde.
My husbonde is to me the worste man
That euer was, sithe the worlde began
But sythen I am a wyfe, it syt not to me
To tellen no wight of our priuite
Neyther in bed ne in none other place
God shylde I shulde tell it for his grace
A wyfe ne shuld not say of her husbonde
But al honour, as I can understonde
Saue vnto you, thus much tel I shall
As helpe me god, he is nought worthe at all
In no degre, the value of a flye
But yet me greueth most his nigardye
And wel ye wot, that women naturally
Desyren thinges syre, as wel as I
They wolden that her husbondes shulde be
Hardy, and wyse, riche, and therto fre
And burom to his wyfe, and freche a bed
But by that ilke lorde that for vs bled
For his honoure, myself to arraye
A sonday next, I moste nedes paye
An hundred frankes, or els am I lorne
Yet were me leuer that I were vnborne
Than me were done a slaunder or a vilanye
And if myne husbonde eke myght it aspye
I nere but lost, and therfore I you prey
Lene me this sūme, or els mote I dey
Dan John I say, lene me this hūdred frākes
Parde I wol not fayle you my thankes
If that ye lyste to do that I you pray
For at a certayne day I wol you pay
And to don you what plesaunce & seruyce
That I may don, right as ye lyste deuyse
And but I do, god take on me vengraunce
As foule as euer had Genilon of Fraunce.
This gēryl mōke answerd in this maniere
Now truly myn owne lady dere
I haue (qō he) on you so great routhe
That I you swere, and plyght my trouthe
That what your husbōd is to Flaūders ifare
I wol delyuer you out of all this care
I wol bring you an hundred frankes
And with that he caughte her by the flankes
And her enbraced hard, and kyssed her ofte
Goth now your way (qō he) al styl & softe
And let vs dyne as sone as euer ye may
For by my kalender it is prime of the day
Goth now, & beth as true as I shal be.
Now els god forbyd sir sayd she
And forth she goth, as ioly as a pye
And bad the cokes that they shulde hem hye
So that men might dyne, and that anone
Up to her husbonde is this wyfe gone
And knocked at his counter doze boldely.
Qui est la (qō he) Peter it am I
(Quod she) how long wol ye fast?
How long tyme wol ye recken and cast
Your sūmes, your bokes, & your thynges?
The deuel haue part of al suche reckenynges
Ye haue ynough (qō she) of goddes sonde
Come down to day, & let your bagges stonde
Ne be ye not a shamed, that dan John
Shal fastyng al this longe day gon?
What let vs go here masse and go dyne.
Wife (qō this mā) lytell canst thou diuyne
The curyous besynesse that we haue
For of chapmen, so god me saue
And by that lorde that called is seynt Iue
Scarsly amonge twenty, twelue shal thryue
Contynuelly, lastyng vnto their age
We may wel make chere & good vysage
And dryue forth the worlde, as it may be
And kepe our estate in priuyte
Tyl we be deed, or els that we play
A pylgrimage, or gone out of the way
And therfore haue I great necessite
Upon this queynte worlde to auyse me
For euermore we mote stonde in drede
Of happe and fortune, in our chapmanhede
To Flaūders wol I gone to morow at day
And come ayene as sone as euer I may
For whiche my dere wyfe, I the beseke
As be to euery wight burom and meke
And for to kepe our good be curyouse
And honestly gouerne wel our house
Thou hast ynough, in euery maner wyse
That to a thrifty huswyfe may suffise
The lacketh none array, ne no vitayle
Of syluer in thy purse thou mayest not fayle
And with ỳ worde, his counter doze he shette
And downe he goth, no lenger wold he lette
And hastely a masse was there isayde
And spedely the tables were layde

And

And to dynner faste they hem spedde
And rychely the chapman this monke fedde.
And after dynner, dan Johan soberly
This chapman toke a parte al prively
And sayd hym thus, cousyn it stondeth so
That wel I se, to Bruges ye wol go
God and seynt Austen spede you and gyde
I pray you cousyn wysely that ye ryde
Governeth you wel also of your dyete
Attemperatly, and namely in thys hete
Betwixt vs two nedeth no straunge fare
Farwel cosyn, god shylde you fro care
If any thinge there be by day or nyght
And it lye in my power or in my myght
That ye me wol cõmaunde in any wyse
It shal be done, right as ye wol devyse
O thing or that ye go, if that it may be
I wolde pray you for to lene me
An hundred frankes, for a weke or twey
For certayne beestes, that I mote nedes bey
To store with a place that is ours
God helpe me so, I wolde it were yours
I shal not fayle surely at my day
Nor for a thousande frankes, a myle way
But let this thyng be secrete, I you pray
For yet this night these beestes mote I bey
And fare nowe wele, myn owne cosyn dere
Graunt mercy of your cost and your chere
¶ This noble marchaunt, gentylly anon
Answerde and sayd, O cosyn dan John
Nowe sikerly, this is a smale requeste
My golde is yours, whan that you leste
And not onely my golde, but my chaffare
Take what you lyst, god shilde that ye spare
But one thyng is, ye knowe it wel ynough
Of chapmen, that her money is her plough
We may creaunce while we haue a name
But goodlesse for to be it is a shame
Pay it ayen, when it lyeth at your ese
After my might, fayne would I you plese.
¶ The hundreth frankes fet he forth anon
And prively toke hem to dan John
No wight of this worlde, wist of this lone
Saving this marchaunt, & dan Johan alone
They drinke & speake, & rome a whyle & play
Tyl that dan Johan ryden to hys abbey.
¶ The morow came, & forth rid this marchãt
To flanders ward, his prêtes brought hym
Til he came to Bruges, wel & merely ataunt
Nowe gooth this marchaunt, wel & besyly
Aboute his nedes, & byeth, and creaunceth
He neither playeth at dyce ne daunceth
But as a marchaunt, shortely to tell
He ledde hys lyfe, and there I let hym dwel.
The sonday next ỳ this marchãt was gon
To seint Denis is comen dan John
With crowne & berde al freshe & new ishaue
In al this house, there nas so lyte a knaue
Ne no wight els, but he was ful fayne
For ỳ my lord dan John was comen agayne
And shortely to the porte for to gon
This faire wyfe accordeth with dan John
That for these .C. frankes he shuld all night
Have her in his armes bolte vpright
And this acorde performed was in dede
In mirthe al night a besy lyfe they lede
Tyl it was day, ỳ dan Johan rydeth his way
And bad the meyne farwel & have good day
For non of hem, ne no wight in the toun
Had of dan Johan any suspecion
And forthe he rydeth, home to hys abbey
Or where him lyste, no more of him I sey.
¶ This marchaunt, when ended was ỳ faire
To saint Denis he gan for to repaire
And with his wyfe he maketh feest & chere
And telleth her that the chaffare is so dere
That nedes must he make a chevysaunce
For he was bonden in a recognysaunce
To pay twelve thousande shildes anon
For whiche this marchaunt is to Paris gon
To borowe of certayne frendes that he had
A certayn frankes, and some with hym he lad
And when he was comen into the toun
For chiefe and great affection
Unto dan John he first gothe him to play
Nought for to borowe of him no money
But for to wete and se of his welfare
And for to tellen him of his chaffare
As frendes don, when they ben mette in fere
Dan John him maketh feest & mery chere
And he him tolde aven ful specially
How he had bought, ful wel and graciously
Thonked be god, all hole his marchaundise
Save that he must, in al maner wyse
Paken a chevysaunce, as for his beste
And then shulde he be in joy and reste
Dan John answerd, certes I am right fayn
That ye in heale be comen home agayn
And if I were riche, as have I blisse
Of twelve thousand shildes shuld ye not misse
For ye so kindely, this other day
Lent me golde, and as I can and may
I thonke you, by god and by saint Jame
But natheless, I toke it unto our dame
Your wyfe at home, the same golde agayne
Upon your benche, she wote it wel certayne

By certayne tokens, that I can her tell
Nowe by your leue, I may no lenger dwell
Our abbot wol out of this toun anon
And in his company I mote gon
Gode wel our dame, myn owne nece swete
And farewel dere cosyn, tyll we mete.
¶ This marchant that was ful ware & wise
Creaunced hath, and eke payde in Paris
To certayne lombardes, redy in her hondes
This some of golde, & gate of hem the bondes
And home he goth, as merry as a popyngay
For wel he knewe he stode in suche aray
That nedes must he wyn by that vyage
A thousande frankes, aboue all his costage.
¶ His wife ful redy mete hym at the yate
As she was wonte, of olde vsage algate
And al that nyght in mirthe they bestette
For he was ryche, and clerely out of dette
What it was day, this marchaũt gan embrace
His wyfe al newe, & kyssed her in her face
And vp he gothe, & made it wonder tough
No more (q̃ she) by god ye haue ynough
And wantonly ayen with him he playde
Tyl at the laste this marchaunt thus sayde.
By god (q̃ he) I am a lytel wrothe
With you my wife, although it be me lothe
And moste ye wyte by god as I gesse
For ye haue made a maner of straungenesse
Betwixt me and my cosyn dan John
Ye shulde haue warned me or I had gon
That he had you an hundred frankes payde
By redy token, & helde him ryght apayde
For that I to hym spake of chenesaunce
Me semed so, as by his countenaunce
But natheles, by god our heuen kyng
I thought not to axe of him nothyng
I pray the wyfe, ne do no more so
Tell me alwayes er that I fro the go
Yf any dettour hath in myn absence
Ypayde the, lest through thy negligence
I myght him axe a thing that he hath payde
¶ This wyfe was not a ferde ne affrayde
But boldely she sayde, and that anon
Mary I defye that falle monke dan John
I kepe not of hys tokens neuer a dele
He toke me certayne golde, I wote it wele
What cayll the dome on his monkes snoute
For god it wote, I wende without doute
That he had yeue it me, because of you
To don therwith myn honour & my prow
For cosynage, and eke for belle chere
That he hath had ful often tymes here
But sithe I se it stonte in suche disioynte
I wol answere you shortely to the poynte.
Ye haue mo slacke dettours than am I
For I wol paye you well and redely
Fro day to daye, and if so be I fayle
I am your wyfe, score it on my tayle
Or els I shal pay it as sone as euer I may
For by my trueth, I haue on myn aray
And not in waste, bestowed it euery dele
And for I haue bestowed it so wele
To your honour, for goddes sake I say
As be not wrothe but let vs laughe & play
Ye shall my ioly body haue to wedde
By god I nyl not pay you but a bedde
Forgeue it me, myn owne spouse dere
Turneth hitherward, and make better chere.
¶ This marchant sawe ther was no remedy
And for to chide, it was but a foly
Sithen that the thing may not amended be
Nowe wyfe he sayd, and I forgeue it the
But tuthy lyfe, be no more so large
Kepe ber my good, this yrue I the in charge
Thus endeth nowe my tale, & god vs sende
Taling inough, vnto our lyues ende.

¶ Here endeth the Shypmans tale,
and followeth the wordes
of our hoste.

Wel sayd by corpus domini (q̃ our host)
Nowe longe mote thou saylle by the coste
Thou gentil maister, gentyl marinere
God geue ỹ moste a thousande fast quad yere
A ha felowes, beware of suche a iape
The moke put in the marchetes hode an ape
And in his wyues eke, by saint Austyn
Drawith no monkes more into your inne
But nowe passe ouer, & let vs seke about
Who shal tell nowe first of all this route
Another tale, and with that worde he sayde
As curtesly, as it had ben a mayde.
My lady prioresse, by your leue
So that I wist ỹ I shuld you not greue
I wol begyne, that ye tellen shulde
A tale nowe, if so be that ye wolde
Nowe wol ye vouchsafe, my lady dere
Gladly (q̃ she) and sayd in this manere.

¶ Here endeth the wordes of our
hoste, & here begynneth the
prioresses prologue.

Domine dominus noster: quã admirabile
est nomen tuum in vniuersa terra.

Lorde

LOrde our lorde, thy name howe meruaylous
Is in this wyde worlde ispradde (quod she)
For not onely thy laude precious
parfourmed is, by men of dignyte
But by the mouthe of childzen thy bounte
parfourmed is, for on the breest sucking
Sometyme shewen they thyn herying

Wherfore in laude, as I can best and may
Of the and of the white lylly floure
Which that they bare, & is a mayde alway
To tellen a storie, I wol do my labloure
Nought that I may encrese her honoure
For she her selfe is honour and rote
Of bounte, next her sonne, of soules bote.

O Mother mayden, O mayden & mother free
O bushe brenning in Moyses sight
That raughtest down fro the deyte
Through thin humblesse, the goost ꝑ in the light
Of whose vertue, whan he in thyn herte pight
Conceyued was the fadres sapyence
Helpe me to tel it in thy presence.

Lady thy bounte, and thy magnificence
Thy vertue and thy great humilyte
There may no tonge expresse, in no science
For sometyme lady, er men praye to the
Thou goest before, of thy benignite
And gerest vs the light through thy prayere
To gyden vs unto thy sonne so dere.

My connyng is so wayke, O blisful quene
For to declare thy grete worthynesse
That I ne may the weyght not sustene
But as a childe of twelue monethe old or lesse
That can unnethes any worde expresse
Right so fare I, and therfore I you pray
Gyde thou my songe, that I shal of you say.

Here endeth the prioresses prologue, and here followeth her tale.

THere was in Asye, in a greate tyte
Amongst christen folke a iewerye
Sustened by a lorde of that countre
For foule vsury, and lucre of vilany
Hateful to Christe, and to his company
And through the strete men might ride or wende
For it was free, and open at euery ende.

A lyttel scole of christen folke there stode
Down at ꝑ farther ende, in which there were
Childzen an hepe, comen of christen blode
That learned in that scole, yere by yere
Such manere doctrine, as men vsen here
This is to say, to synge and to rede
As smale childzen doen in her childhede

Amonges these childzen was a wedowes sonne
A lyttel clergion, that seuen yere was of age
That day by day to scole was his wonne
And eke also, where he sey the ymage
Of Christes mother, had he in vsage
As him was taught, to knele adown and say
An Aue maria, as he goth by the way.

Thus hath this wedow, her litel child ytaught
Our blisful lady, Christes mother dere
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught
For the sely childe, wold al day synge here
But ave, wher I remembre me on this matere
Seint Nicholas stode euer in my presence
For he so yonge to Crist did reuerence

This lyttel childe his litel booke lernyng
As he sate in the scole at his prymere
He Alma redemptoris mater herd synge
As childzen lerned her antiphonere
And as he durst he drough ay nere and nere
And herkened the wordes and the note
Tyl he the firste verse couth al by rote

Nought wist he what this latyn was to say
For he so yonge and tender was of age
Ne no man of his felowe gan he pray
To expounde him the song, in his langage
Or telle him why this song was in vsage
This praide he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme, vpon his knees bare

His felowe, which that elder was than he
Answered

Answerd he thus, this song I have herd say
Was made of our blessed lady fre
Her to salewe, and eke her for to prey
To ben our helpe, & succour when we dey
I can no more expowne in this mater
I lerne songe, I can but smale grammer

And is this songe ymade in reuerence
Of Christes mother, sayd thys innocent
Nowe certes I wol done my dilygence
To conne it al er Christemmasse be went
Though that I for my primer shall be shent
And shulde be beten thryse in an houre
I wol it conne, our lady to honoure.

His felaw taught him homwarde prively
Fro day to day, tyl he couthe it by rote
And than he songe it wel and boldely
Fro worde to worde, acording to the note
Twise a day it passeth through his throte
To scolewarde, & homwarde when he went
On Christes mother set was al his entent

As I have sayde throughout the iewrye
This litel childe as he came to and fro
Ful merely than wolde he singe and crye
O Alma redemptoris mater, euer mo
The swetenesse hath his herte perced so
Of Christes mother, that to her to pray
He can not stynte of singyng by the way

Our first for, the serpent Sathanas
That hath in Iewes hert his waspes nest
Up swal and sayd, O cruake people alas
Is this a thing to you that is honeste
That suche a boy shal walke as him leste
In your despyte, & singen of suche sentence
Which is agaynst your lawes reuerence

From thence forthe, the Iewes han conspire
This innocent out of this worlde to chase
An homicide therto han they hyred
That in an aley, had a priuy place
And as the childe gan forby to pace
This cursid Iewe him hent, and held faste
And cutte his throte, & in a pitte him caste

I say that in a wardrope they him threwe
Where that the Iewes purged her intrayle
O cursyd folke, of herodes all newe
What may your yuel entent you auayle
Murder wol out, certes it wol not fayle
And namely ther y honor of god shal sprede
The blode out cryeth on your cursyd dede

O mater, sowned into virginite
Now mastle thou sing folowinge euer in
The white lambe celestyall (quod he)
Of whiche the great euangelyste seint John
In Pathmos wrote, which saith y they go
Before this lambe, & sing a songe al newe
That neuer fleshly woman they ne knewe.

This poore widowe, awayteth al the night
After her litel childe, and he came nought
For which as soone as it was day light
With face pale for drede and busy thought
She hath at scole, and eke where him sought
Tyl finally, she gan so farre espye
That he was laste seyne in the iewrye

With mothers pyte, in her brest enclosed
She goth as she wer halfe out of her mynde
To euery place, where she hath supposed
By lykelyhode her childe for to fynde
And euer on Christes mother, meke & kynde
She cryed, and at last thus she wrought
Among the cursyd iewes she him sought

She frayneth and she prayeth pitously
To euery iewe that dwelleth in thilke place
To telle her, yf her childe went there by
They say nay, but Jesu of hys grace
Yaue in her thought, within a litel space
That in that place, after her come she cryede
There he was caste, in a pitte besyde.

O great god, that performist thy laude
By mouthe of innocentes, lo here thy might
This gemme of chastite, this emeraude
And eke of martyrdome the rubye bright
There he with throte ycorne lay vpright
The Alma redemptoris gan to synge
So loude that all the place gan to ryng

The christen folke, y through the strete went
In comen, for to wonder on this thing
And hastely they for the prouoste sent
He came anone, without tarieng
And herieth Christ, that is of heuen kyng
And eke his mother, honoure of mankynde
And after that, the iewes let he bynde

This childe with pytous lamentacion
Was vp taken, singing his songe alway
And with honoure, and great procession
They

They caryen him to the nexte abbey
His mother swowninge by the bere lay
Unneth might people that were there
This newe Rachell bringe fro his bere.

With turment & with shamfull deth ilke one
This provost doth these iewes for to sterue
That of this murdre wiste, & that anone
He nolde no suche cursydnesse observe
Yuel shall he have, that yuel wol deserve
Therfore with wild horse he did hem drawe
And afterwarde he honge hem by the lawe.

Upon his bere aye, lyeth this innocent
Before the chefe aulter, whiles ỳ masse last
And after that, the abbot with his couent
Hem spedde, for to bury him als faste
And when the ỳ holy water on hym caste
yet spake ỳ child, whē sprint was holy water
And songe, O alma redemptoris mater

This abbot, which that was an holy man
As monkes ben, or els ought to be
This yonge childe to coure he began
And sayde: O dere childe, I halse the
By vertue of the holy Trinite
Tell me what is thy cause for to syng
Sithens thy throte is cutte to my seming.

My throte is cutte, unto my necke bone
Sayd this childe, as by way of kynde
I shoulde have deyde, ye longe tyme agone
But Jesu Christ, as ye in bokes fynde
Wol that his glory laste and be in mynde
And for the worthip of hys mother dere
Yet may I syng (O alma) loude and clere.

This wel of mercy, Christes mother swete
I loued alway, as after my comyng
And when that I my life shoulde forlete
To me she came, and badde me for to syng
This antem verely in my dyeng
As ye han herde, & when that I had songe
Me thought she layd a grayne upon my tonge

Wherfore I sing, & singe mote certayne
In honour of the blysful mayden fre
Tyl fro my tonge, of taken is the grayne
And after that, thus she sayd to me
My litle childe, nowe wol I fetche the
When that the grayne is fro thy tong ytake
Be not agaste, I wol the not forsake,

This holy monke, this abbot him mene
His tonge out caught, & tok away the graye
And he yaue up the goste ful softly
And when this abbot had this wonder seyne
His salte teres trykled downe as reyne
And grofle he fel all flate to the grounde
And stylle he lay, as he had ben ybounde.

The couent lay eke upon the pament
Wepyng and herieng Christes mother dere
And after that they rysen, & forthe ben went
And tok away this martir fro the bere
And in a tombe of marble stones clere
Enclosen they his litle body swete
There he is nowe, god leue us for to mete.

O yonge Hewe of Lyncoln slayne also
With cursyd iewes, as it is notable
For it is but a lytel whyle ago
Praye eke for us, we synful folke unstable
That of his mercy, god be merciable
On us, his great mercy multyply
For the reuerence of his mother Mary.

Here endeth the Prioresse tale. And here folowe the wordes of the Hoste to Chaucer.

When sayd was this miracle, every man
As sobre was, as wonder was to se
Till that our hoste to japen began
And than at erste, he loked upon me
And sayde thus: what man arte thou (qd he)
Thou lokest, as thou wouldest finde an hare
For ever upon the grounde I se the stare

Approche nere, and loke up merely
Nowe ware you sirs, & let this man have
Pace in the waste is shapē as wel as I
This were a popet in armes to embrace
For any woman, smale and fayre of face
He semeth elusche by his countenaunce
For unto no wight dothe he daliaunce

Say nowe sōwhat, sithēs other folke han said
Tel us a tale of mirthe and that anon
Hoste (qd he) be not evyl apayde
For other tale certes can I none
But of a ryme, I lerned yore agone
Ye that is good (qd he) we shullen it here
Som deynte thing, me thinketh by thy chere

Here endeth the wordes of the Hoste and here foloweth the tyme of sir Thopas.

Lysteneth lordynges in good intent
And I wyll tell verament
Of Myrthe and of solas
All of a knyght was faire and gent
In batayle and in turnament
His name was sir Thopas.
Iborne he was in ferre countre
In Flaunders, al beyonde the see
At Poperyng in the place.
His father was a man ful fre
And a lorde he was of that countre
As it was goddes grace.
Sir Thopas was a doughty swayne
Whyte was his face as payne mayne
His lyppes rede as rose
His rudde is lyke scarlet in grayne
And I you tell in good certayne
He had a semely nose.
His heer, his berde was lyke safroun
That to his girdel raught adoun
His shone of cordewane.
Of Bruges were his hosen broun
His robe was of chekelatoun
That cost many a jane
He couthe hunt at the wylde dere
And ryde an hauking for by the ryuere
With grey goshauk on honde
Therto he was a good archere
Of wrastlyng was there none his pere
Where any Ram shulde stonde.
Full many a mayde bright in boure
They mourne for him paramoure
Whan hem were bet to slepe.
But he was chast, and no lechoure
And swete as is the bramble floure
That bereth the rede hype.
And so befell upon a day
For sothe, as I you tell may
Sir Thopas wold out ryde.
He mouth upon his stede gray
And in his honde a launce gay
A longe swerde by his syde.
He pricketh thorow a faire forest
Therin was many a wylde beest
Ye bothe buck and hare.
And as he pricketh north and est
I tel you, him had almest
Betydde a foly care.
There spryngen herbes great and small
The lycorys and the setuall
And many a clowe gelofer
And notmygges, to put in ale
Whether it be newe or stale
Or for to lye in cofer.
The birdes singen, it is no nay
The sperhauke and the popyngay
That joy it was to here.
The throstel eke made his lay
The wodcocke upon the spray
She song ful loude and clere.
Sir Thopas fyl in loue longyng
And when he herde the throstel syng
He pricked as he were wode
His fayre stede in his pricking
So swette, that men might him wryng
His sydes were al blode.
Sir Thopas eke so wery was
For pricking on the softe gras
So fiers was his corage
That doune he layde him in that place
To maken his stede some solace
And gaue him good forage.
Oh, sayntt Mary, benedicite
What ayleth thys loue at me
To blynde me so sore.
Me dremed al this night parde
An elfe quene shal my lemman be
And slepe under my gore.
An Elfe quene wol I love ywys
For in this worlde no womanis
Worthy to be my make in towne
Al other women I forsake
And to an Elfe quene I me take
By dale and eke by downe.
Into his sadel he clombe anone
And pricked over style and stone
An Elfe quene for to espye
Tyl he so longe hath rydden and gone
That he fonde in a priuy wone
The countre of fayrye. So wylde
For in that countre was there none
Neyther wyfe ne childe
Tyll him there came a great Geaunt
His name was called sir Olyphaunt
A perylous man of dede.
He sayde childe, by Termagaunt
But if thou pricke out of my haunt
Anone I slee thy stede with mace
Or elles I go out of this place
Here is the quene of fayrye
With harpe and pype, and symphonye
Dwellyng in this place.

The

The childe saide, als so mote I the
To morow wol I meten the
When I haue myne armure.
And yet I hope par ma faye
That thou shalt with this launce gay
Abyen it ful soze: Through thy mawe
Shal I perce, if I may
Or it be fully pryme of the day
For here thou shalt be slawe.
Sir Thopas drowe abacke full fast
This giaunt at him stones cast
Out of a fell staffe slyng.
But fayze escaped sir Thopace
And all was through gods grace
And thorow his fayze berng.
Yet lysteneth lordynges to my tale
Merier than the nyghtyngale
For now I wol ye rowne.
How sir Thopas, with sydes smale
Prickynge ouer downe and dale
Is cõmen ayen to towne.
His merry men commaunded he
To maken him both game and gle
For nedes must he fyght.
With a gyaunt, with heedes thze
For paramoures and iolyte
Of one that shone full bryght.
Do come he said my mynstralcs
And iestors, for to tellen vs tales
Anon in myn armyng.
Of romaunce that ben royals
Of popes and of cardynals
And eke of loue longyng.
They set him first the swete wyne
And mede eke in a mazelyne
And royall spicerye.
Of gyngerbread that was ful fyne
Of lycozes and eke comyne
With suger that is trye.
He dyd nezt his white lere
Of cloth of lake fyne and clere
A breche and eke a sherte.
And nezt his shert an haketon
And ouer that an haberion
For percyng of his herte.
And ouer that a fyne hauberke
Was all wrought of Iewes werke
Full strong it was of plate.
And ouer that his cote armoure
As whyte as is the lylly floure
In which he wolde debate.
His shylde was al of gold so reed
And therin was a bozes heed
A carbocle by his syde.
And there he swoze on ale and breed
Howe that the gyaunt shuld be deed
Betyde what betyde.
His iambeux were of cure buly
His swozde the bet of quoute
His helme of latonbrught.
His sadel was of rych rucl bone
His bridle as the sunne shone
Or as the moone lyght.
His spere was of fyne cypres
That bydden warre, and nothing pease
The heed full sharpe ygrounde.
His stede was al dappel gray
He goth an aumble by the way
Ful softely and rounde in londe.
Lo lordes myn, here is a fyt
If ye wol any more of it
To tellen it wol I fonde.

NOw hold your mouth for charite
Both knight and lady fre
And herkeneth to my spell
Of batayle and of chyualrye
And of ladyes loue drerye
Anon I wol you tell.
Men speken of Romaunces of pris
Of Horne childe, and of Ipotys
Of Bcuys, and of sir Gye
Of sir Lybeaux, and Blaundamoure
But sir Thopas, he bereth the floure
Of royall chyualrye.
His good stede he bestrode
And forth vpon his way glode
As sparke out of the bronde.
Upon his creste he bare a toure
And therin stycked a lylly floure
God shylde his cors fro shonde.
And for he was a knyght auentrous
He nolde slepen in none house
But lygge in his hood.
His bryght helme was his wanger
And by him fedde his destrer
Of herbes fyne and good.
Him self dronke water of the well
As dyd the knight sir Perseuel
So worthy under wede.
Here endeth the ryme of sir Thopas,
and begynneth ỹ wordes of our host.

NO more of this for goddes dignyte
(Qd our host) for thou makest me
So wery of thy very lewednesse
That also wysly god my soule blesse

O.i. Myne

Myne eeres aken of thy drafty speche
Nowe suche a ryme, the deuell I beteche
This may wel be clepe rime dogrell (qd he)
Why so (qd I) why wolt thou let me
More of my tale, than any other man
Sens that it is the beste ryme I can.
By God (qd he) playnly at a worde
Thy drafty rymyng is not worth a torde
Thou doest nought els but spendest tyme
Sir at one worde, thou shalt no lenger ryme
Let se whether thou canst tel ought in gest
Or tell in prose somwhat at the lest
In which ther may be some mirth or doctrine
Gladly (qd I) by goddes swete pyne
I wol you tel a lytle thinge in prose
That ought lyke you, as I suppose
Or elis ye be certes to daungerous
It is a moral tale vertuous
Al be it tolde sometyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folke, as I shal you deuise
As thus, ye wot that euery euangelyst
That telleth vs the payne of Jesu Christ
Ne saith not al thing as his felowe dothe
But nathelesse her sentence is al sothe
And al acorden in her sentence
Al be there in her tellyng difference
For some of hem saine more, and some lesse
Whan they his prouse passion expresse
I meane of Marke, Mathew, Luke, & John
But doutlesse her sentence is al one
Therfore lordynges, I you beseche
If that you thinke I vary in my speche
As thus, though I tell somwhat more
Of prouerbes, than ye han herde byfore
Comprehended in this lytle treatise here
To enforcen with the effect of my matere
And though I not the same wordes say
As ye han herde, yet to al you I pray
Blameth me not, for in my sentence
Shul ye not fynde mochell difference
Fro the sentence of this trewes lyte
After the which, this mery tale I write
And therfore herkeneth, what I shal say
And let me tell my tale I you pray.

Here endeth the wordes of our hoste and here begynneth Chaucers tale of Melibeus.

A Yonge man called Melibeus, myghty & ryche, begate vpon his wife that called was Prudence, a doughter which that called was Sophie. Upon a daye byfell that he for his dysporte is went into the feldes him to playe: his wyfe and eke his doughter hath he lefte within hys house, of which the dores were fast ishette. Foure of his olde foos han it aspyde, and setten ladders to the walles of his house, & by ye wyndowes ben entred, and bete his wife, and wounded his doughter with fyue mortall woundes, in fyue sondry places: That is to say, in her fete, in her hondes, in her eeres, in her nose, & in her mouthe, and lefte her for deed, and wenten her waye.

Whan Melibeus retourned was into his house, and sey al this mischefe, he like a madde man rentyng his clothes, gan to wepe & crye.

Prudence his wife, as ferforth as she durst besought hym of his wepynge for to stynte: But not for thy he gan to wepe and crye euer lenger the more. This noble wife Prudence remembred her vpon the sentence of Ouyde, in his boke that cleped is the remedy of loue, where as he saithe, he is a foole that destourbeth the mother to wepe in ye deth of her child tyll she haue wepte her fyll, as for a certayne tyme: and than shall a man done his diligence with amyable wordes to recomfort and praye her of her wepynge for to stynte. For which reason this noble wyfe Prudence, suffred her husbonde to wepe and crye, as for a certayne space: and whan she sawe her tyme, she sayde him in this wise. Alas my lorde (qd she) why make ye your selfe for to be lyke a foole? For sothe it appertayneth not vnto a wyse man to maken suche a sorowe. Your doughter with the grace of god, shall warische & escape. And al were it so that she right now were deed, ye ne ought not as for her dethe your selfe destroy. Senek saith, ye wise mã shall not take too grete discomforte for the dethe of his children, but certes he shuld suffre it in pacience, as wel as he abydeth the deth of his owne proper person. This Melibeus answerde anon and sayd: What man (qd he) shuld of his wepyng stynte, that hath so great a cause for to wepe: Jesus him selfe our lorde, wepte for the dethe of Lazarus his frende. Prudence answerd, certes wel

wel I wote a temperate wepinge is nothing defended to him ꝑ ſorowful is, amonge folke in ſorow, but it is rather graũted hi to wepe. The Apoſtle Poule vnto ꝑ Romans writeth, men ſhuld reioyce wh him that maketh ioye, & wepe with ſuch folke as wepen. But thoughe a temperate weping be graũted, certes outra gious weping is defẽded. Meſure of weping ſhuld be cõſydred after ꝑ loſe that techeth vs Cenek. Whan ꝑ thy frende is deed (qõ he) let not thin eyen to moiſt ben of teeres, ne to mo che die: although teeres comen to thyn eyẽ, let hem not fall. And whan thou haſte forgon thy frende, do diligẽce to get another frende: and this is more wiſdom thã for to wepe for thy frẽde whiche thou haſt loſne, for therin is no bote. And therfore yf ye gouerne you by ſa pience, put away ſorow out of your hert. Remẽbreth you that Jeſus Syrake ſaith, a man that is ioyous and glad in herte, it hym conſerueth flowyſhynge in hys age: but ſothely a ſorowful hert maketh his bones dry. He ſaith eke thus, that ſorow in hert ſleeth full manyẽ a man. Salomon ſaithe, ꝑ ryght as mough thes in the ſhepes fleyſe anoyeth the clothes, and the ſmale wormes the tree, right ſo anoy eth ſorowe ꝑ hert of man, wherfore vs ought as well in the deeth of oure children, as in the loſſe of our temporall goodes, haue pacience.

Remembre you vpon pacient Jobe, whan he had loſt his children and his temporall ſub ſtaũce, and in his body endured and receyued full many a greuous trybulacyen, yet ſayd he thus: Our lorde it ſent to me, our lorde hathe byraft it me, right ſo as our lord wold, right ſoit be done, ibleſſed be the name of our lord. To theſe forſaid thinges Melibeus vnto his wife Prudẽce anſwerd: Al thy words (qõ he) ben true, & therto profytable, but truely myn hert is troubled wh this ſorowe ſo greuouſly, that I not what to do. Let cal (qõ prudence) your true frẽdes al & thy lynage, which ꝑ ben wiſe, & telleth hem youre caſe, & herkeneth what they ſay in counſaylyng, & gouerne you after her ſentẽce. Salomon ſayth, werke all thy thynges by counſaile, & thou ſhalte neuer rue. Than by counſaile of his wife Prudence, this Melibeus let cauſe a great congregaciõ of people, as ſurgyens, phyſicions, olde folke and yonge, & ſome of his olde enemyes reconcyled (as by her ſemblante) to hys loue and to his grace: And therwithal there came ſome of his neighbours, that did him reuerence moze for drede thã for loue, as it happe ofte. There comen alſo ful many ſubtyl flatereres, & wyſe aduocates lerned in the law. And whan theſe folke togiders aſſembled wer, this Melibeus in ſorowful wiſe ſhewed hem his caſe, and by the maner of his ſpeche, it ſemed ꝑ in herte he bare a cruel yre, redy to don vengeaunce vpon his foos, & ſodainly he deſyred ꝑ werre ſhulde begyn, but natheleſſe yet aſked he counſayle vpon this mater. I ſurgyen by lycence and aſſente of ſuche as were wyſe bp roſe, & vnto Melibeus ſaide as ye ſhall here.

¶ Sir (qõ he) as to vs ſurgiens apertayneth that we do to euery wight the beſt ꝑ we can, where as we ben withholden, & to our patiẽt that we don no damage: Wherfore it happeth manye tyme & ofte that whan two men haue euerych wounded other, one ſurgyen healeth hẽ both, wherfore vnto our arte it is not pertynẽt to norſche werre, ne parties to ſupporte. But certes as to ꝑ warnyng of your dough ter, al be it ſo that perilouſly ſhe be wounded, we ſhal do ſo tẽtife beſineſſe fro day to nyght that wh the grace of god ſhe ſhall ben hole and ſounde, as ſone as is poſſyble. Almoſt ryght in the ſame wiſe the phiſiciens anſwerd, ſaue that they ſayden a fewe wordes more: That right as maladies ben by her cõtraries cured, right ſo ſhall man warniſhe werre by peace. His neighbours full of enuye, his fayned frẽ des that ſemed reconcyled, and his flatereres, maden ſemblaũce of weping, & enpaired and agrutched moche of this mater, in prayſynge greatly Melibe of myght, of power, of richeſſe and of frendes, diſpyſing the power of his ad uerſaries: and ſaide vtterlye, ꝑ he anon ſhulde wreken him on his foos, and begyn werre.

Up roſe thã an aduocate that was wiſe, by leue & by counſayle of other ꝑ were wyſe, and ſayd: The nede for the which we ben aſſẽbled in this place, is ful heuy thyng, & a gret mater by cauſe of the wrong and of the wickednes ſe that hath be don, and eke by reſon of gret da mages that in tyme cõmynge ben poſſyble to fallen for the ſame, & eke by reſon of the great richeſſe & power of the parryes bothe, for the whiche reſons it were a ful great peryl to erre in this mater. Wherfore Melibeus this is our ſentence, we cõſaile you aboven al thig, that ryght anon thou do thy dylygence in kepyng of thy propre perſon, in ſuch a wyſe that thou ne want none eſpye ne warche, thy body for to ſaue: And after that we cõſaile that in

thyn house thou set sufficient garryson, so as they may as wel thy body as thi hous defēd: but certes to mourn war, or to don sodainly vengeaūce, we may not deme in so lytel time that it were profitable, wherfore we aske leiser & space to haue deliberaciō in this cāse to deme, for the cōmen prouerbe sayth thus: he that sone demeth sone shall repēt. And eke mē sayne, thylke iudge is wyse that sone vnderstondeth a matter, & iugeth by leyser: for al be it tarieng be noyfull, algate it is not to be reproued in veuynge of iugement, ne in vengeaunce takyng, whan it is sufficient & resonable. And ỳ shewed our lord Jesu Crist by ensample, for whan ỳ woman was taken in aduoutry & was brought i his presēs to knowē what shuld be don of her person, all be it ỳ he wist wel him selfe what he wold answere, yet he wold he not answere sodenly, but he wold haue deliberacion, & in the grounde he wrote ewise, & by this cause we aske deliberacion: and we shall than by the grace of God counsayle you that thyng that shall be profytable.

Up sterte than the yonge folke at ones, & the most part of ỳ cōpany haue skouted this olde wise mā, & begō to make noise & saide. Right so as whiles ỳ yron is hote men shuld smyte, right so men shuld wreken her wrōges while that they bene freshe & newe, and with loud voice they cried, werre, werre. Up rose thone of the olde wise, & with his hond made countenaunce ỳ they shulde holden hem styll & yeuen him audience. Lordynges (qō he) there is full many a man that cryeth werre werre, ỳ wote full lyte what werre amouēteth. Werre at his begynnyng hath so great an entryng and so large, that euery wight may entre whan hym lyketh, & lyghtly fynd werre: but certes what ende therof shal fal, it is not lightly to know. Whan that warre is ones bigon, there is full many a childe vnborne of his mother, ỳ shall sterue yong bicause of thilke werre, other elis lyue in sorowe, or dye in wretchydnesse: And therfore or ỳ any werre be bygon, men muste haue great counsayle and good deliberacion. And whan this olde man wende to enforcen hys tale by reason, wel nye all at ones bygon for to ryse for to breke his tale, & bydden him ful oft his wordes for to abregge: for certes he that precheth to hem ỳ lyste not to here his wordes, his sermon hem anoyeth. For Jesus Sirake saith, ỳ wepynge in musike is a noyous thing. This is as muche to say, as muche anayleth it to speke byforne folke to whych hys speche anoyeth, as it is for to syngen byforne hem that wepe. And whan this wyse man saw ỳ him wanted audience, al shamfast he set him adoun ayen. For Salomon sayth, There as thou mayest not haue audyence, enforce ỳ not to speke. I se wel (qō this wise man) that ỳ cōmen prouerbe is sothe, ỳ good counsayle wanteth, whan it is most nede.

Yet had this Melibeus in his cōsayle many folke, ỳ priuely in his eere cōsailed him certayne thynges, & counsayled hym the contrary in general audience. Whan Melibeus had herde that the greatest part of hys counsayle were accorded ỳ he shulde make werre, anone he consented to her counsaylynge, & fully affirmed her sentence. Than dame Prudence, whan ỳ she saw her husbōde thope him for to awreke him on his enemies, & to begin werre: she in ful hūble wise, whan she saw her tyme said to him these words. My lord (qō she) I you beseche as hertely as I dare or can, ne haue you not to fast, and for all guerdons yeue me audiēce. For peter Alphōs saith. Who so doth to the good or harme, haste the not to quyte it, for in this wyse thy frende wol abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger lyue in drede. The prouerbe saith, he hasteth wel ỳ wisely can abyde: And in wicked hast is no profyte.

This Melibe answerd to his wife Prudēce: I purpose not (qō he) to werke by thy counsayle, for many causes & resōs, for certes euery wight wolde holde me than a fole. This is to say, if I for thy counsaylynge wolde chaūge thynges that bē ordayned and affirmed by so many wise. Secondly, I say that all women ben wicked, and none good of hem al. For of a thousande men saith Salomon, I fonde one good man: but certes of all women founde I neuer non. And also certes, if I gouerned me by thy cousaile, it shuld seme that I had yeue the ouer me ỳ maistry: & god forbyd that it so were. For Jesus Sirake saith, that if ỳ wife haue maistry, she is contrarious to her husbōd. And Salomon sayth. Neuer in thy lyfe to thy wife, ne to thy childe, ne to thy frēde, ne yeue no power ouer thi self, for better it were that thy childrē aske of thy thynges that hem nedethe, than thy selfe to be in the handes of thy children. And also if I wol werch by thy counsayle, certes my cousayle must be sōtime secret til it were tyme that it must be known: and this ne may not be, if I shuld be cousay-

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led by ꝑ. Whã dame Prudence ful debonairly and with great patience, had herd al that her husbõde liked for to say, thã asked she of him lycence for to speke, & saide in this wyse. My lorde, qõ she as to youre fyrste reson, it maye lyghtly ben answerd. For I say that it is no folye to chaũge counsayle, whan the thyng is chaunged, or els whan the thig semeth other wise thã it semed afore. And moreouer I say, though that ye haue swore & behight to performe your empryse, and by iuste cause ye do it not: men shulde not say therefore ye were a lyer & forswoin. For ꝑ boke saith, that ꝑ wise man maketh no lesynge, whan he turneth hys corage for ꝑ better. And al be it that your empryse be establisshed & ordeyned by great multytude of folke, yet dare you not accomplisshe thilke ordynaũce but you lyketh: for ꝑ trouth of thinges and the profyte ben rather foũden in fewe folke that ben wise and ful of reason, than by great multitude of folke, there euery man cryeth and clattereth what him lykethe: forthy suche multitude is not honest. And as to the seconde reson, where as ye saye, that al women ben wicked: saue your grace. Certes ye dispryse al women in this wise, and he that al dispriseth, as sayth the boke, al displeaseth. And Senecke sayth, that who so woll haue sapyence, shall no man dyspraise, but he shall gladly teche the sciyence that he can, wythout presumpcyon or pride: and suche thynges as he nought ne can, he shal not ben a shamed to lerne hem, and to enquire of lesse folke than him selfe. And ꝑ there hath ben many a good womã, may lyghtly be proued: for certes sir our lorde Jesu Christ nolde neuer han descended to be borne of a woman, if al women had be wicked. And after that, for the great bounte that is in womẽ, our lorde Jesu Christ, whan he was ryseñ fro dethe to lyfe, apered rather to a woman than to his apostels. And though that Salomon sayde, he founde neuer womẽ good, it folowyth not therfore that al women be wicked: for thoughe that he ne found no good woman, certes manye an other man hathe founde manye a woman full good and trewe. Or els paraventure the entent of Salomon was this, that in souerayne bountie he founde no woman, this is to say: that there is no wight that hath partyte bountie saue god alone, as he him selfe recordeth in hys euangelie. For there nys no creature so good that him ne wanteth somwhat of the perfection of God that is his maker. Youre thryde reson is this, ye say that if that ye gouerne you by my counsayle, it shulde seme that ye had reue me the maistry and the lordshyp of youre person. Sir saue your grace it is not so, for if so wer that no man shulde be counsayled but only he of hem that han lordshyp and maistrye of his person, men nolde not be counsayled so ofte. For sothly thilke man that asketh counsayle of a purpose, yet hath he fre will whether he wol do after that counsayle or non. And as to youre fourthe reson, there as ye sayne that the iangleryes of women can hyde thynges that they wot not, as who saith, that a woman can not hyde that she wote. Sir, these wordes ben vnderstonde of women that ben iangleres & wicked, of whiche women men sayne ꝑ three thinges driuen a man out of his house, that is to saye, smoke, droppynge of rayne, and wycked wyues. And of such women Salomon sayth, that a man were better dwell in desert, than with a woman ꝑ is riotous. And sir by youre leaue I am not I, for ye haue fal ofte a tyme my great silence and my greate pacience, and eke how wel that I can hyde & hele thynges that men ought ten secretly to hyden. And forthy as to youre fyrste reson, where as ye say that in wicked counsayle women ben quike men, God wote that thilke reason stante here ful wel: for vnderstondeth, nowe ye assenten to my counsayle for to do wickednesse: and yet ye wolde werken wickednesse, and youre wyfe restrayneth thilke wicked purpose, & ouercome you by reson and by good counsayle, certes youre wife ought rather to be praised than blamed. Thus shulde ye vnderstonde the philosopher that sayth, that wycked counsayle women ben quike her husbondes. And there as ye blame al women and her resons, I shall shewen you by many ensamples that many women haue be full good, and yet bene, & her counsayle ful soun and profytable. Eke some men han sayd that the counsayle of women is eyther to dere, or to lyte worthe. But albeit so that full many women be bad, and her counsayle vile and nought worthe, yet han men founde full many a good woman, & ful discrete & wyse in counsayling. Lo Jacob throughe the counsayle of his mother Rebecke, wan ꝑ benyson of his father, & the lordshyp of al his brethern. Judith through her good counsayle, deliuered ꝑ cite of Bethule, in whiche she dwelt, out of the hond of Holofern ꝑ had it all beseged, & wold haue

distroyed it. Abigayle delyuered Naball her husbōd fro Dauid ꝑ king, ꝑ wold haue slayn him, & apeased the yre of the kyng by her wyt and by her good counsel. Hester by her cōsell enhaūsed greatly ꝑ people of god in ꝑ reigne of Assuerus the kynge. And the same bountye in good cōsaylyng of many a good woman may mē rede & tell. And furthermore whan ꝑ our lorde had created Adam oure former father, he said in this wise: It is not good to be a man alone: make we an helper to hym selfe semblable. Here maye ye se that yf that women were not good, & her counsaile good and profytable, our lorde God of heuen ne wolde neyther han wrought hem, ne called hem the helper of man, but rather confusion to man.

And there sayd a clerke ones in two verses. What is better than golde? Jasper. What is better than Jasper? Wysdome. And what is better than wysdom? Woman. And what is better than a good woman? ꝑ is a good man. And what is better thā a good man? nothig. And sir, by many other reasons maye ye sene, that many women ben good, and eke her cōsayle good and profytable. And therefore syr, if that ye wol truste to my counsayle, I shall restore you your doughter hole and sounde, & eke that I wol do you so muche, that ye shall haue honour in this case.

Whan Prudence had herd the wordes of his wyfe Prudence, he said thus. I se well that ꝑ wordes of Salomon be soth. For he saith, the wordes that be spokē discretly by ordinaūce ben honycombes, for they yeuen swetnesse to the soule, and holsomnesse to the body. And wyfe by cause of thy swete wordes, and eke for I haue proued and assayed thy great sapyence and thy great trouthe: I wol gouerne me by thy counsayle in al thing.

¶ Now sir qō dame Prudence) and sythens that ye vouchsafe to be gouerned by my counsayle, I wol enforme you howe that ye shall gouerne your selfe in chosynge of your counsaylours. Ye shal first in al your werke meekly beseechynge to the hye god that he wold be youre counsayloure, and shapeth you to suche entent that he yeue you counsayle & comfort, as taughte Thobye hys sonne. At all tymes thou shalte blysse god, and pray him to dresse thy wayes, and loke eke that thy counsayles bene in him euer more. Saynt James sayth, if any man of you haue nede of sapience, aske it of God. And afterwarde, than shullen ye take counsayle in youre selfe, & examyne well youre owne thoughtes, of suche thynges as you thynken that ben beste for youre profyte. And than shal ye dryue fro your hert thynges that be contraryous to good cōsaile: that is to say, ire, couetyse, and hastynesse.

¶ First he that asketh counsayle of hym selfe, certes he must be without ire and wrath in him selfe, for many causes. The first is thys: He that hath great ire and wrath in hym selfe he weneth alway that he may do thyng that he may not do. And secondly, he that is ydons and wrothful, he may not well deme: And he that may not wel deme, may not well cōsell. The thirde is this, he that is ydous & wroth, as saith Seneke, maye not speke but blameful thynges, and with thilke vycious wordes he styreth other folke to angre & to ye. And eke sir ye muste dryue couetyse oute of youre herte. For the Apostle sayth, that couetyse is the rote of al harmes. And trusteth right well that a couetous mā ne can not deme ne thynk but onelye to fulfyll the ende of his couetyse: and certes that ne may neuer be accōplished, for euermore, the more habundaunce that he hath of richesses, the more he desyreth. And sir ye muste also dryue oute of youre herte hastynesse: for certes ye may not deme for the best a sodayne thought that falleth in your hert, but ye muste auyse you on it ful ofte: For as ye haue herd here byfore, the comen prouerbe is this. Ye that sone demeth, sone repenteth. Sir, ye ne be not alway in lyke disposiō, for certes some thing that semeth sometymes you that is good for to do, an other tyme it semeth to you the contrarye.

And whan ye han taken counsayle in youre selfe, & han demed by good deliberacyon such thynge as you semeth beste, than rede I you that ye kepe it secrete. Ne wraye ye not your counsayle to no person, but if so be ꝑ ye were sikerly that through your bewrayenge, your condicion shal be to you the more profytable. For Jhesus Syrake sayth: neither to thy sone ne to thy frende discouer not thy secret, ne thy folye: for they wol yeue you audyence and lokyng, and supportacion in your presence, and scorne you in yor absēce. Another clerk saith, that scarsly shall you fynde anye person that may kepe counsaile secretly. The boke sayth, while ꝑ thou kepest thy cōsaile in thyn hert, thou kepest it in thy pryson: and whan thou bewrayest thy counsaile to any wight, he hol-

deth the in his snare. And therfore you is better to hyde your counsayle in your hert, than to pray him to whom ye haue bewrayde your counsayle, that he woll kepe it close styll. For Seneca sayeth: If so be that thou mayst not thyn owne counsayle hyde, howe darste thou pray any other wight thy counsayle secrete to kepe. But natheleesse if thou wene likerly that the bewrayeng of thy counsayle to a person woll make thy condicion stonde in the better plyght, than shalte thou tell hym thy counsayle in thys wyse. First thou shalte make no semblant whether the were leuer peace or warre, or this or that, ne shewe him not thy wyll ne thyn entent: for truste wel that comenly these counsaylours ben flatterers, namely the counsaylours of great lordes, for they enforce hem alway rather to speke pleasaunt wordes, enclyning to the lordes luste, than wordes that ben trewe or profitable, and therfore men say that the ryche man hath selde good counsayle, but yf he haue it of hym selfe. And after that thou shalt consider thy frendes and thyn enemyes. And as touchynge thy frendes, thou shalte consider whiche of hem ben most faythful and moste wyse, and eldest, and moste approued in counsaylynge: and of hem shalte thou aske thy counsayle, as the case requireth.

I say, that first ye shal cal to your counsaile your frendes that ben trewe. For Salomon sayeth: that right as the hearte of a man delyteth in sauoure that is sote, right so the counsayle of trew frendes yeueth swetnesse to the soule. And he sayethe also, there may nothyng be liked to the trew frend: For certes golde ne syluer be not so muche worth as the good wyl of a trewe frende. And also he sayth that a trewe frende is a strong defence, who so that it fynderth hath a great treasure. Than shal ye also consider if that your true frendes be discrete and wise: for the boke sayth, aske alway thy counsayle of them that be wyse. And by this same reason shal ye call to your counsayle your frendes that ben of age, suche as seme and ben expert in many thynges, and ben approued in counsaylyng. For the boke sayethe, that in olde men is sapience, and in longe tyme the prudence. And Tullius sayth, that greate thinges be not ayen accomplyshed by strength ne by delyuernesse of body, but by counsayle, by auctorityes of persones, and by science: the whiche thre thinges ne ben not feble by age, but certes they enforce & encrease day by day and than shal ye kepe this for a generall rule.

First shall ye call to your counsayle a fewe of your frendes that ben especial. For Salomon sayth, many frendes haue thou, but amonge a thousande chose the one to be thy counsaylour: For al be it so that thou fynd, ne tel thy counsayle but to a fewe, thou mayste afterwarde tel it to mo folke if it be nede. But loke alway that thy counsaylers haue those condicions that I haue sayd before, that is to save, that they be trewe, wyse, & of olde experience. And werke not alway in euery nede by one counsayler alone: for somtyme behoueth it to be counsayled by manye. For Salomon sayth, saluacion of thinges is where as there be many counsaylers.

Howe haue I tolde you of which folke ye shal be counsailed: nowe wol I tel you whiche counsayle ye ought to eschue. First ye shall eschue the counsaylynge of fooles. Salomon sayth, take no counsayle of a foole, for he wol counsayle but after his owne lust and his affection. The boke sayth, that the propertie of a foole is this: he troweth lightly harme of euery man, and lightly troweth al bountie of him selfe. Thou shalte eschue the counsaylyng of all flatterers, whiche as enforcen hem rather to prayse your person by flatterye than for to tel you the sothfastnesse of thinges. Wherfore Tullius sayth, amonge all the pestilences that ben in frendshyp, the greatest is flaterye. And therfore it is more nede to eschue & drede flatterers, than any other people. The boke sayth, thou shalt rather fle fro the swete wordes of flatering and praysing than fro the egre wordes of thy frendes that seyn the sothes. Salomon sayth, that the wordes of a flatterer is a snare to catche innocentes. He sayth also, he that speketh to his frende wordes of flaterie & of pleasaunce, he setteth a net before hys fete to catche hym. And therfore Tullius sayth, Enclyne not thyn eeres to flatterers, ne take no counsayle of flatterers. And Caton sayth, Juyse the wel. And eschue the wordes of swetenesse & of pleasaunce. And eke thou shalt eschue the counsayling of thyn olde enemies that ben reconciled. The boke sayth, that no wight returneth safely into y grace of his olde enemye. And Hope sayth, ne trust not to hem, to whiche thou hast fortune had werre or enemyte, ne tel hem not thy counsaile. And Seneke telleth the cause why it may not be, for he sayth, there as great fyre hath long

tyme endured, that there dwelleth some va-
poure of here. And therfore saith Salomon,
in thyn olde foe truste thou neuer. For sykerly
though thin enemy be recõciled, and make the
signe of humilite, & lout to the with his heed,
truste him neuer: for certes he maketh thilke
fayned humilite more for his profite then for
any humilite, or for anye loue of thy person,
bycause ỳ he demeth to haue victory ouer thy
persone by suche fayned countenaunce, the
which victorie he might not haue by strife or
werre. And Petrus Alphons sayth, make no
felowship with thyn olde enemies, for if thou
do hem bountie, they wollen peruert it to wic-
kednesse. And eke thou must eschue the coun-
saylinge of hem that ben thy seruauntes, and
beren the gret reuerence: for peraduenture they
sayn it more for drede than for loue. And ther
fore saith a philosopher in this wise. There is
no wight parfitly true to him that he dredeth
And Tullius saith, there is no might so great
of any emperour that longe may endure, but
he haue loue of the people and drede. Ye shall
eschue also the counsayling of folke that ben
dronkelewe, for they ne can no counsaile hyde.
For Salomõ saith, ther nis no priuite ther as
regneth dronkenesse. Ye shall haue also sus-
pecte the counsayling of suche folke as coun-
sayle you one thing priuely, and cõsayle you
the contrarye openly. For Cassidorie sayth,
ỳ it is a maner of sleight to hynder his enemy
when he weneth to don a thyng openly, and
werketh priuely the contrarye. Thou shalte
haue also in suspecte the counsayling of wic-
ked folke, that be alwaye full of fraude. And
David sayth, that blissful is the man ỳ hath
not folowed the counsayling of shrewes.

Thou shalte also eschue the counsaylinge of
yonge folke, for her counsayling is not rype,
as Salomon sayth.

¶ Nowe sir, sithens I haue shewed you of
suche folke as ye shal be counsayled of, and fo
lowe it: nowe wol I teche you howe ye shall
examine your counsayle. After the doctrine
of Tullius, in examininge of youre counsay-
lours, ye shal consider many thynges.

First thou shalte consider thilke thinge that
thou purposest, and vpon that thinge ỳ thou
wolte haue cõsaile, that very trueth be sayd
and cõserued, this is to say, tel truely thy tale
for he that sayth falle, may not wel be coun-
sayled in that case, of whiche he lyeth. After
this thou shalte consider the thinges that a-
corden to that thou purposest for to do by thy
cõsaylours, if reason accorde therto, and eke
if thy might maye attayne thereto: and if the
more parte and the better parte of your coun
saylours accorden therto or no. Than shalte
thou consider what thing shal folowe of her
counsaylinge: As hate, peace, werre, grace,
profyte, or domage, and many other thinges:
and in all thinges thou shalte chose the beste,
and weyue al other thiges. Than shalte thou
consider of what rote is engendred the mater
of thy counsayle, and what fruite it maye con
ceyue and engender. Thou shalte eke consider
al the causes, from whenche they be sprong.
And when thou hast examined thy counsayle,
as I haue sayde, and which party is the bet-
ter and more profytable, and hast approued
it by many wise folke & olde, than thou shalte
consider, if thou maiste performe it, and make
of it a good ende. For certes reason wol not
that any man shall begin a thinge, but yf he
might performe it as him ought: ne no wight
shoulde take vpon him so heuye a charge, but
that he might bere it. For the prouerbe sayth,
he that to muche embraceth distrayneth ful.
And Caton sayth, assaye to do suche thinges
as thou hast power to done, leste the charge
oppresse the to sore, that the behoueth weyue
thing that thou haste begonne. And if so be
that thou be in dout, whether thou maist per-
fourme a thinge or none, chose rather for to
suffer than to begynne. And Peter Alphons
sayth, if thou hast myght to do a thynge, of
whiche thou muste repente, it is better holde
thy tonge stylle than for to speke. Than maiste
thou vnderstonde by stronger reasons, that if
thou haste power to perfourme a werke, of
whiche thou shalt repent the, than is it better
thou suffre than begyn. Wel sayne they that
defenden euerye wight to assaye a thinge of
which he is in dout whether he may perfourme
it or none. And after when ye haue exami-
ned your counsayle (as I haue sayde before)
and knowe wel, that ye may perfourme youre
emprise: conferme it than sadly tyl it be at an
ende. ¶ Nowe it is reason and tyme that I
shewe you, whan and wherfore that ye may
chaunge your counsayle, withouten repreue.
Sothly a man may chaunge his purpose and
his counsayle, if the cause ceaseth, or whan a
newe case betydeth. For the lawe sayth, that
vpon thinges that newely betideth, behoueth
newe counsayle. And Seneke sayth, yf thy

counsayle

coũsaile is come to the eres of thin enemies, chaunge thy counsayle. Thou mayste also chaunge thy coũsayle, if so be thou finde that by errour or by any other cause, harme or damage maye betyde. Also yf thy counsayle be dishoneſt, other els come of dishoneste cause, chaunge thy counsayle. For the lawe sayethe, that al behestes that be dishoneſt, ne ben of no value: And eke, yf so be that it be impossyble or may not gladly be performed or kepte.

And take this for a general rule, that euery counsayle that is enfourmed so strongly, that it may not be chaunged for no condicion that may betyde, I say ỳ like coũsayle is wicked.

Melibeus, when he had herd the doctryne of hys wyfe dame Prudence, answerde in this wise. Dame (quod he) as yet vnto this tyme ye han wel taught me, as in gouernayle howe I shall gouerne me in the chosing and in the withholdinge of my counsayle: But nowe wolde I faine that ye wold condiscẽde in especiall, how ỳ ye semeth by our counsaylours that we haue chose in this present nede.

(By lorde (quod she) I beseche you in all humblesse, that ye wol not wylfully replye ayenst my resons, ne displeper your hert though I speke thing that you displese, for god wot as in min entent, I speke it as for youre helle and for youre honoure and profite eke, and sothly I hope that your benignite woll take it in patience. And truiteth me well that your coũsayle in this case ne shold not (as to speke properly) be called a counsaillinge, but a mocion or a mouynge of folye, in whiche counsayle ye haue erred in many a soudrye wyse.

First ye haue erred in ỳ assemblinge of your counsaylours: For first ye shulde haue cleped a fewe folke to youre counsayle, and after ye might haue shewed it to mo, if it had be nede. But ye haue cleped to your counsayle a great multitude of people, full chargeous and full noyous for to here. Also ye haue erred, for there as ye shoulde haue onely cleped to your counsayle your trewe frendes, olde and wise, ye haue cleped straunge folke, ponge folke, false flatterers, and enemyes reconsiled, and folke that done you reuerence without loue. And eke ye haue erred, for ye haue broughte with you to your coũsayle, ire, couetyse, and hastynesse, the whiche thre thynges ben contrary to euery good counsayle, honest & profytable, the whiche thre thinges ye haue not distroyed neither in your selfe ne in your coũsaylours, as ye ought. Ye haue erred also for ye haue shewed to your coũsaillours your talent and your affeccios to make werre anon, and for to do vengeaunce, as they haue espyde by your wordes, to what thinge ye ben enclyned: and therefore han they rather coũsayled you to your talent, than to youre profyte. Ye han erred eke, for it semeth that you sufficeth to haue be counsayled by these counsaylours onely, and with lytle auysement, where as in so hye and in so great a nede, it had bene necessarye mo counsaylours, and more deliberacyon to performe your empryse. Ye han erred also, for ye haue not examyned your coũsayle in the forsayd maters, ne in dewe maner as the case requireth. Ye haue erred also, for ye made no diuision betweene your trewe frendes & youre fayned counsaylours: ne ye haue not knowen the wyll of your trewe counsaylours & frendes, olde, and wyse, but ye haue cast all her wordes in an hocheper, & enclyned your hert to the more part and to the greter nombre of fooles than of wyse men. And therfore ỳ coũsaylinges ỳ bene at congregacyons and multitudes of folke, there as men take more regarde to the nombre than to the sapience of persons, ye seme wel, that in such coũsaylynges, fooles han the maystrye. (Melibe answerde and said ayen: I graunt well that I haue erred, but there as thou hast tolde me here byforne, that he nys not to blame, that chaungeth his counsayle in certayne case and for certayne and iuste cause, I am all redye to chaunge my counsaylours ryghte as thou wolden deuyse. The prouerbe sayethe, for to done synne is mánysshe, but certes for to perseuer longe in synne, is werke of the deuell.

To this sentẽce answereth anon dame Prudence & saide: Examyneth (qd she) well youre counsayle, and let vs se whiche of hem hathe spoke moste resonably, and taughte you beste counsayle. And for as muche as ỳ examynacion is necessarye, lette vs begyn at surgens and phisicens, that first spake of this mater. I say that phisicens and surgens haue said you in your coũsayle discretly, as hem ought: and in her speche sayd full wisely, that to the office of hem apertayneth to done to euerye wight honoure and profyte, and no wight to anoye, and after her crafte to don great diligence vnto the cure of hem, whiche they haue in her gouernaunce. And ryght as they haue

answerde

answerde wisely & discretly, right so rede I that they be hyely and souerainly guerdoned for her noble speche, & eke for they shul more done their entencife besinesse in the curacion of your doughter: for al be it so they ben your frēdes, therfore shullen ye not suffre, that they serue you for naught, but ye ought therafter guerdon hem, and pay hem her largesse. And as touching the proposicion, which the phisiciens entreteden in this cause, this is to sayne, that in maladies is, that cōtrarie is warished by an other contrarie: I wolde fayne knowe howe ye understonde thilke text, and what is your sentence. Certes (qd Melibeus) I understond it in this wise. Right as they han do me a cōtrarie, so shulde I done hem an other, for right as they han venged hem upon me, and done me wronge, right so woll I venge me upon hem, and don hem wronge, and than have I cured one contrarye by an other.

Lo lo qd dame Prudence howe lightly is euery man enclyned to his owne desyre & his owne pleasaunce. Certes qd she the wordes of the phisiciens ne shulde not ben understōd in that wise, for certes wickednesse is not contrarie to wickednesse, ne vengraunce is not contrarie to vengraūce, ne wronge to wrōge, but euery of hē engendreth other. But certes the wordes of the phisiciens shuld be understonde in this wise, for good & wickednesse ben two contraries: and peace and werre, vēgraūce, & suffraūce, discord, & acord, and many other thinges: But certes wickednesse shalbe warished with goodnes, discorde by acorde, werre by peace, & so forthe in other thinges. And therto acordeth sayne Paule the apostel in many places: he sayth, ne yelde not harme for harme, ne wicked speche for wicked speche, but do wel to hem ỹ don to ỹ harme, & blesse them that sayth the harme. And in many other places he amonesteth peace & acord. But now wol I speke of the counsayle which was yeue unto you by menne of lawe, and the wise folke, and olde folke, that sayden all by one acorde as ye herde before, that ouer al thinges ye shall done your besinesse & diligence to kepe your persone, and to warnestore your house: And they sayde also, that in this cause ye ought to werchen ful wisely and with greate deliberacion. And sir, as to the firste poynte, that toucheth the keping of your person: ye shall understōde that he ỹ hath werre, shall euer deuoutly & mekely prayen, byfore al thinges, that Jesu Christ of his mercy wol have him in his protectiō, and to be his soueraine helper at his nede: For certes in this worlde there nis no wight that may be counsayled and ykept sufficiently without the keping of our lorde Jesu Christe. To this sentence acordeth the prophet Dauid that sayth: If god ne kept the cite, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth. Nowe sir, than shoulde he cōmitte the kepynge of your person to your true frendes, that ben approued and yknowe, and of hem shulde ye aske helpe, your person to kepe. For Caton sayth: If thou have nede of helpe, aske it of thy frendes, for there nys none so good a phisicien as thy true frende. And after this than shal ye kepe you fro al straunge folke, & fro lyers, and have alway in suspecte her companye. For Peter Alphons sayth. Ne take no company by ỹ way of no straūge man, but if so be that thou haste knowen him of longer tyme: And if so be that he fall into thy companye, parauenture whithouten thin assent & good wyll, enquire than as subtelliye as thou canst of his conuersacion, and of hys lyfe byforne, and fayne thy way, sayeng thou woldest go thyder as thou wolte not go, and if he bere a spere, holde the on the right syde of hym, and if he beare a swerde, holde the on the lefte syde of hym. And than shall ye kepe you wisely from al manet of suche people as I have said you here before, and hem and her counsayle eschue. And after thys than shal ye kepe you, in suche manner, that for anye presumpsion of your bodely strength, that ye dispyse not ne acounte not the might of your adversary so lyte, that ye let the keping of your person for your presumpcion, for euery wyse mā dredeth his enemy. And Salomon sayth: A very foole is he that of all hath drede: But certes he that throwe hardenesse of hys hert and through the hardinesse of him selfe, hath to great presumpcion, him shall yuell betyde. Than shal ye euermore encounter wayte, embushementes, and all espiaile. For Seneke sayethe: The wise man that dredeth harmes, eschueth harmes: he ne falleth in to no perylles, that peryll eschweth. And al be it so that thou seme, that thou be i secret place, yet shalt thou alway don diligence in kepinge of thy person, this is to say, ne be not negligent to kepe thyne owne person, not onely for the greatest enemy, but also for thy leste enemy. Seneke sayth, a man that is wel adurysed, he

dredeth

dredeth his leste enemye. Ouyde sayth, that the lytel wesel woll slee the great bulle & the wilde herte. And the prouerbe sayth, that a lytel thorne wol greue a kyng ful sore, and a lytel hounde wol holde the wylde bore. But natheless I say not thou shalt be so coward, that thou doute where as is no drede. The boke sayth, that some men haue great luste to disceyue, but yet they drede to be disceiued And kepe the fro the companye of skorners: for the boke sayth, with skorners ne make no company, but flye her wordes as venym.

Nowe as to the seconde poynte, where as youre wise counsaylours counsayled you to warnestore your house with great diligence, I wolde fayne knowe howe ye understonde thilke wordes, and what is your sentence.

Melibeus answerde and sayd, certes I understonde it in this wise, that I shall warnestore my ne house with toures, suche as haue castels and other maner edifices, and armure and archeries, bet wene which thinges I may my person and my house so kepe and defende that myne enemyes shullen be in drede myne house to aproche. To this sentence answerde anon Prudence. Warnistinge of the of hye toures & of hye edifices, is with great costages and with great trauayle, and whan that they ben accoplished, yet ben they not worthe a strawe, but if they ben defended with trewe frendes, that ben olde and wyse. And understonden wel, that the greteste and the stroigest garnison that riche men maye haue, as well to kepen her person as her goodes is, ý they be yloued with her subiectes, and with her neyghbours. For thus sayth Tullius, that there is a manet garrison, that no man may e venquishe ne discomfite, and that is a lorde to be yloued of his citezins, & of his people. Nowe sir, as to the thirde poynt, where as your olde and wise counsaylours sayd, that ye ought not sodaynly ne hastely procede in this rede, but that ye oughten purueyen and apparayle you in this case, with great diligence and deliberation. Certely I trowe that they sayd right trewly & right soth. For Tullius saith: In euery dede or thou begin it, apparayle the with great diligence. Than saye I, in venge aunce takynge, in werre, in batayle, and in warnestorynge, or thou begyn I rede ý thou apparayle the therto, and do it with great deliberation. For Tullius sayth: The longe apparayling tofore the batayle, maketh short victorye. And Cassiodorus sayth: The garryson is stronger, whan it is longe tyme auysed. But nowe let vs speke of the counsayle that was acorded by your neyghbours, suche as done you reuerence wythouten loue, your olde enemyes reconciled, your flatterers, that counsayled you certayne thinges priuely, and openly counsayled you ý contrarye. The yonge folke also, that counsayled you to venge you, and to make werre anon. Certes sir, as I haue sayde byfore, ye haue greatly erred to clepe suche maner of folke to youre counsaile, whyche counsaylours ben ynoughe reproued by the resons aforesayd. But natheless let vs nowe discende to the speciall. Ye shul first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. Certes the trouthe of this mater or of this counsaile, nedeth not diligently to enquire, for it is well wyste, whiche they ben that han don you this trespas and vilanye, and howe many trespassours, and in what maner they haue done all this wronge to you, and all this vilanye. And after this, than shull ye examyne the seconde condicio, which Tullius addeth in this mater. For Tullius putteth a thynge, which that he clepeth consentynge: thys is to saye, who ben they, and whiche ben they, and howe many, that consenten to thy counsayle in thy wylfulneſſe, to done hastye vengeaunce. And let vs consyder also who ben they, and howe many they ben that consented to your aduersaryes. As to the first point, it is well knowen which folke they be, that consented to your hasty wilfulneſſe. For trewly all tho that counsayle you to maken sodayne werre, ne be not your frendes. Let se nowe whyche ben they that ye holden so greatly your frendes, as to your person: For albeit so that ye be mighty & riche, certes ye bene but a lone: for trewlye ye ne haue no childe but a doughter, ne ye haue no brethren ne cosyns germayns, ne none other nye kynrede, wherfore your enemyes shulde thynke to plede with you, ne to destroye your person. Ye knowe also that your richeſſe mote be dispended in diuerse parties. And whan ý euery wight hath his parte, they wollen take but ly tell regarde to venge youre dethe. But thyne enemies ben thre, & they haue many brethern, children, cosyns, & other nye kynred: & though so were, that thou haddest slayne of hem two or three, yet dwelleth ther ynow to auenge her dethe, and to sle thy person. And though so be that your kinrede be more stedfaste and siker than

than the kyn of your aduersaries, yet neuer the lesse your kynred is but after kinrede, for they ben but lyttell sybbe to you, and the kyn of your enemies ben nye sybbe to hem. And certes as in that, her condicion is better than is yours. Than lette vs consider also of the counsaylinge of hem that counsayled you to take sodayne vengraunce, whether it accorde to reson or non: And certes ye know well nay, for as by right and reson, there may no man take vengraunce of no wight, but the iuge that hath iurisdiccion of it, when it is graunted hym to take vengraunce hastely or attemperately as the lawe requirith. And yet more ouer of thilke worde that Tullius clepeth cõsenting, thou shalte consent, if that thy might and thy power may consente and suffise to thy wylfulnesse, and to thy counsaillours: And certes thou maiste well saye nay, for sykerlye as for to speke properly, we may do nothing but suche thinge as we may done rightfully: and certes rightfully ye may take no vengraunce, as of your owne proper auctoure. Than may yt be that your power ne consenteth not ne accordeth not with your wilfulnesse. Nowe sir vs remayne the thirde poynt, that Tullius clepeth consequence. Thou shalte vnderstonde that the vengraunce that thou purposest for to take is consequent, and therof foloweth an other vengraunce, peryl, and werre, and other damages wythouten numbre, of which we be not warre, as at this tyme. And as touchynge the fourthe poynt, ỳ Tullius clepeth engrudging, thou shalte consider, that this wrong, whiche that is don to the, is engrudged of the hate of thyn enemies, and of the vengraunce taking vpon hem, that wolde engender a nother vengraunce, and muche sorowe & wastyng of rychesse, as I saide ere. Nowe sir, as touchynge the fifte poynte, that Tullius clepeth causes, whiche is the laste poynte, thou shalt vnderstonde, that the wronge that thou haste receyued hathe certayne causes. whiche that clerkes callen oftyme, and ofttymes, and causa longinqua, and causa propinqua, that is to saye, the ferre cause, and the nyghe cause. The ferre cause is almighty god, that is cause of al thinges. The nere cause is the thre enemies. The cause accidental was hate. The cause material, ben the fiue wouñdes of thy doughter. The cause formal, is the maner & their werkyng that brought ladders, and clambe in at thy windowes. The cause finall was for to sle thy doughter, it letted not in as moche as in hem was. But for to speke of the ferre cause, as to what ende they shulle come, or fynally what shall betyde of hem in this caas, ne canne I not deme, but by coniecturyng and supposing: for we shall suppose that they shal come to a wicked ende, by cause that the boke of decrees saith. Seld or with grace payne, bene causes brought to a good ende, whan they ben badly begon.

Nowe sir, if men wolde aske me why that god suffred men to do you this villany. Certainly I can not wel answere, as for no sothfastnesse. For the Apostell sayth, that the sygnes and the iudgementes of our lorde God almighty ben ful depe, there may no man comprehende ne serche hem. Natheless by many reasonable presumpcions & coniecturynges, I trowe and byleue, that god whiche that is ful of grace & of rightwisnesse, hath suffred this tribulacion, by iuste cause reasonable. ¶ Thy name is Melibee, this is to say, a man that drynketh bony. Thou haste dronke so muche bony of swete temporel richesses, and delices of the nouns of this worlde, that thou arte dronke, and hast forgotten Ihesu Christ thy creatour. Thou ne haste not done to him suche honour and reuerence as thee ought, ne thou ne haste not taken kepe to the wordes of Ouide that sayth. Vnder the bonye of the goodes of the body, is hid the venym that sleeth the soule.

And Salomon saith: Yf it so be that thou hast founde bony, ete of the same bony, that is that sufficeth: for yf so be that thou ete of the same bony out of mesure, thou shalte spewe, and also be nedye and poore. And parauenture almyghty god Ihesu Christ, hath pyte and pite, and hath turned away fro the this vengeaunce, and his yeres of mercy and mercy. And also he hath suffred a grete leeser, ỳ thou shuldest be punished & chastised, in the maner that thou hast trespased and offended. Thou hast done synne agayns our lorde Christ, for certes the thre enemyes of mankinde, that is to saye: the flesshe, the fende, and the worlde, thou haste suffred hem entre in to thyne herte wylfully, by the wyndowes of thy body, and hast not defended thy selfe sufficiently ayens their assautes & their temptacions, so that they haue wouñded thy soule in fyue places, that is to saye: The deedly synnes, that ben entred in to thy herte by thy fyue wyttes. And in ỳ same maner oure lorde Christ hath wolde and suf-

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fred that thy thre enemyes be entred into thy house by the wyndowes, and haue wounded thy doughter in the forsayd maner.

Truely (quod Melibee) I se wel that ye enforce you moche by wordes to ouercome me, in suche maner that I shall not venge me on myn enemyes, the ioyng me the perylles & the yuels that myght fall of this vengeaunce, but who so wolde consyder in all vengeaūces, the perils and yuels that myght sue of vengeaūce takyng, a man wolde neuer take vengeaūce, and that were harme: for by the vengeaunce takyng, ben the wicked mē delyuered fro the good men. And they that haue wyll to do wickednesse, refrayn their wicked purpose, whā they se the punishyng & chastysing of the trespasours: And yet say I more, that right as a synguler person synneth in takynge vengeaunce of a nother man, ryght so synneth he the iuge, if he do no vengeaunce of hem that haue deserued. For Seneke sayth thus: That mayster he sayth is good, þ preueth thieues. And as Catho dor sayth: A man dredeth to do outrages, whā he wote and knoweth, that it displeseth to the iuges and soueraynes. And an other sayth: The iuge that dredeth to do right maketh men thieues. And sayn Poule the apostle sayethe in his epistle, whan he writeth vnto the Romaines, that the iuges beare not the spere without cause, but they beare it to punish the thieues & misdoers, and for to defende the good men. ¶ If ye wol than take vengeaunce of your enemyes, ye shal returne and haue your recourse to the iuge that hath the iurysdiction vpon hem, & he shall punysshe hem as the lawe axeth and requireth.

Ha, sayd Melibee, this vengeaunce liketh me ne thyng, I bethynke me nowe, and take hede how that fortune hath nourisshed me fro my childhede, and hath holpe me to passe many a strong pas: þ nowe I wol assaye her, trusting with gods helpe, that she shall helpe me my shame for to auenge.

Truely sayd Prudence, if ye wol werke by my counsayle, ye shall not assay fortune by no wayes me ye shall not leue or bowe vnto her, after the worde of Seneck. For thinges that ben folysshly done, and that ben done in hope of fortune, shall neuer come to good ende. And as the same Seneke sayethe: The more clere and the more shyning that fortune is, the more bryef and the sooner broke she is. Trusteth not in her, for she is not stedfast ne stable. For whan thou trowest to be moste sure & stedfast of her helpe, she wol fayle and deceyue the. And where as ye saye, þ fortune hath nourysshed you fro your childhod, I say that in so moch ye shal þ lesse trust in her, & in her wytte. For Seneke sayethe: What man that is nourysshed by fortune, she maketh him a great foole. Nowe than sith ye desyre and aske vengeaunce, and the vengeaunce that is done after the lawe, and before the iuge, ne lyketh you not, and the vengeaunce that is don in hope of fortune is perylous & vncertayne, than haue ye none other remedye, but for to haue your recourse vnto the soueraine iuge, that vengeth al billanyes and wronges. And he shall venge you, after that hym selfe wyll, where as he sayethe: Leaue the vengeaunce to me, and I shall do it.

¶ Melibe answerde, if I me venge me of þ billany that men haue don to me, I somon or warne hem, that haue done to me þ billanye, and all other, to do me another billanye. For it is written: If thou take no vengeaunce of an olde billany, thou somonest thyn aduersaryes to do the a newe billany: And also for my sufferaūce men wolde do me so moch billany, that I might neither bere it ne suffre it, & so shulde I be put & holden ouer lowe. For men sayn, in mykel suffring shal many thinges fal vnto the, which thou shalte not mowe suffer.

¶ Certes, qd Prudence I graūt you, that ouer moche sufferaunce is not good, but yet me folowyth it not therof, þ euery person, to whō men do billanye, shulde take of it vengeaūce: for that appertayneth and longeth al only to iuges, for they shulde venge the billanies and iniuries: And therefore those two auctoures that ye haue sayd afore, ben only vnderstode in the iuges: For whan they suffer ouer moche the wronges & billanyes to be done, without punyshment, they somon not a man all onelye for to do newe wronges, but they comaund it. Also a wyse man sayth, that the iuge that correcteth not the synner, comaundeth & bydeth him do synne. And the iuges and soueraynes, myght in their londe so moche suffre of þ thieues & misdoers, that they shulde by ouer sufferaunce, by processe of temps, were of suche power & myghte, that they shulde put out the iuges and the soueraynes from their places, and at laste, make hem leese her lordshyppes.

But let vs nowe suppose, þ ye haue leue to

venge you: I saye ye be not of might & power as nowe to venge you, for if ye wol make cõparison vnto the myght of your aduersaries, ye shulde fynde in many thynges that I haue shewed you er this, that their cõdycion is better than yours, and therfore saye I, that it is good as nowe, that ye suffre and be pacient.

Furthermore, ye knowe well that after the comen sawe, it is a wodnesse, a man to stryue with a stronger or a more myghtye man than he is hym selfe, and for to stryue wyth a man of euen strength, that is to say, with as stõge a man as he is, it is peryll: and for to stryue with a weker man, it is foly, & therfore shulde a man ꝺye stryuig as mikel as he might. For Salomon saythe: It is a great worshyp to a man to kepe hym fro noyse & stryfe: and yf it so befal & happe that a man of greater myght and strength than thou arte, do the greuaũce: study & besye the rather to stylle the same greuaunce, than for to venge the. For Seneke sayth, that he putteth hym in great peryl, that striueth wt a greater man thã he is him selfe. And Caton sayth, if a man of higher astate or degre, or more mighty than thou, do the anoy or greuaũce, suffre him: for he that ones hath greued the, may an other tyme releue the and helpe the. Yet sette I case ye haue lycence for to venge you, I saye that there ben full many thinges, that shall restrayne you of vengeaunce takyng, and make you for to enclyne to suffre, and for to haue pacięce in the wronges that haue bene done to you. First & formest yf ye woll consyder the fautes that ben in youre owne person, for whiche fautes god hath suffred you haue this trybulaciõ, as I haue said to you here before. For the poete sayth, that we ought pacięntly take the tribulacions that come to vs, whan that we thynke & consyder that we haue deserued to haue the. And saynt Gregorie saith, that whan a man considereth well the nombre of his defautes & of hys synnes, the paynes and the tribulacions that he suffreth, seme the lesse vnto hym. And in as moche as him thinketh his synnes more heuy and greuous, in so moche semeth hys payne the lighter & the esyer vnto hym. Also ye owe to enclyne and bowe your herte to take the pacience of our lorde Jesu Christ, as sayth saint Peter in his epystles. Jesu Christe he saythe hath suffred for vs, & yeurn ensample to euery man to folowe and sewe him, for he dyd neuer synne, ne neuer came there a vyllaynous woꝛde out of his mouth. Whan men cursed hym, he cursed hem not. And whan men bett him, he manaced hem not. Also the great pacience, whiche saintes ꝑ den in paradyse hane had in trybulacion ꝑ they haue suffred, without her deserte or gylt, ought moch stryre you to pacience. Ferther more, ye shull enforce you to haue pacience, consideryng that the tribulacions of this worlde but lytell whyle endure, and sone passed ben and gon, and the ioy that a man seketh to haue by pacience in trybulacions is perdurable, after that ꝑ apostle saith in his Epistle. The ioye of God he sayethe, is perdurable, that is to saye, euerlastyng. Also troweth and byleueth stedfastlye ꝑ he is not well nourysshed and well taught, that cannot haue pacyence, or woll not receyue pacyence. For Salomon sayethe, that the doctryne and the wytte of a man is knowen by pacyence. And in an other place he sayth, that he that is pacyent, gouerneth hym by great prudence.

And the same Salomon sayethe. The angry and wrothfull man maketh noyses, and the pacyent man attempreth and stylleth hem. He sayethe also, it is more worth to be pacient than to be ryghte stronge. And he that may haue the lordshyp of his owne herte is more to prayse, than he that by his force or strength taketh great cytyes. And therfore saithe saint James in his epystle, that pacience is a great vertue of perfectyon.

Certes (qꝺ Melibee) I graũt you dame Prudence, that pacience is a great vertue of perfectiõ, but euery man may not haue the perfection that ye seke, ne I am not of the nombre of ryght perfyte men. For myn hert may neuer be in peace, vnto the tyme it be auenged. And al be it so that it was great peryll to myne enemyes to do me a vyllanye, in takyng vengeaũce vpon me, yet toke they no hede of the peryll, but fulfylled her wycked wyll and her corage: And therefore me thynketh mẽ ought not repreue me, though I put me in a lytel peryl, for to auẽge me, & though I do a great excesse, that is to saye: that I venge one outrage by an other.

Ah (qꝺ dame Prudence, ye say your wyll as you lyketh: But in no case of the worlde a man shoulde not do outrage ne excesse for to venge him. For Cassiodor sayth, that as yuell dothe he that vengeth him by outrage, as he that dothe the outrage. And therefore ye shall

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venge you after the order of righte, that is to say, by the lawe, and not by excesse ne by outrage. And also yf you wol venge you of ꝑ out rage of your aduersaries in other maner than right commaundeth, ye synne. And therfore sayth Seneke: that a man shall neuer venge wrecchednesse by wrecchednesse. And yf ye say that right asketh to defende violence by violence, and fyghting by fyghtyng: certes ye say soth, whan the defence is don without intreual, or without taryeng or delay, for to defend hym, and not for to venge him. And it behoueth that a man put suche attemperaūce in his defence, that men haue no cause ne mater to reprene him that defenderh him of outrage and excesse, for els were it agayne reason. Parde ye knowe well, ꝑ ye make no defence as now, for to defende you, but for to venge you: and so sheweth it that ye haue no wyll to do your dede attemperatly, and therfore me thynketh that pacience is good. For Salomon saythe, that he ꝑ is not pacyent shal haue grete harme.

CErtes sayd Melibee I graūt you, that whan a man is impacience and wrothe of that that toucheth him not, and that appertayneth not vnto him, thoughe it harme hym it is no wonder. For the lawe sayth, that he is coulpable, ꝑ entremetteth or medleth with suche thinges as apertayneth not vnto hym. And Salomō saith, that he that entremetteth of the noise or strife of another man, is lyke to him that taketh a straūge houde by the eeres: for right as he, that taketh a straunge houde by the eeres, is other while bytten by ꝑ houd, right so in the same wyse it is reason that he haue harme that by his impacyence medleth him of the noyse of an other man, where as it appertayneth not vnto hym. But ye knowe wel that this dede, that is to say my grefe and my disese, toucheth me right nyghe. And therfore though I be wrothe and impacient, it is no mervayle: and sauynge youre grace I can not se that it might greatly harm me, though I toke vengeaunce, for I am richer and more myghty thā myn enemyes be: And wel know ye that by money and by hauynge great possessyons, bene all thynges of this worlde governed. And Salomon sayth, all these thynges obey to money.

Whan Prudence had herde her husbonde amaunte him of his richesse and his moneye, dispraysing the power of his aduersaries, she spake and sayd in this wyse. Certes dere sir, I graunte you that ye be ryche and myghty, and that ꝑ richesse is good to hem that haue wel gotten hem, and that well can vse them. For right as the body of a man may not lyue without the soule, no more may it lyue without the temporel goodes, and by richesse may a man get him greate frendes. And therefore sayth Pamphilus: If a nerthes doughter be saythe be ryche, she may chese of a thousande men, whiche she wol take to her husbond: for of a thousande, one wol not forsake her ne refuse her. And this Pamphilus sayth also: If thou be right happy, that is to say, if thou be riche, thou shalte fynde a great nombre of felowes & frendes. And if thy fortune chaūge, farewel frendshyp & felowshyp, for thou shalt be alone without anye companye, but yf it be the companye of poore folke. And yet sayth this Pamphilus more ouer, that they that be bonde and thrall of lynage, shal be made worthy and noble by the rychesses. And right so as by the richesses there come many goodnesses, right so by pouerty come there many harmes and yuels, for greate pouertye constrayneth a man to do many yuels. And therfore calleth Casiodor pouertie ꝑ mother of rume, that is to say, the mother of ouerthrowing or of fallyng downe. And therfore sayth Peter Alfonce: One of the greatest aduersyties of this worlde is whan a free man by kynde or of byrth, is cōstrayned by pouerty to eete the almesse of his enemye. And the same sayth Innocent, in one of his bokes: he sayth, that sorowfull and mischappe is the condicion of a poore begger, for yf he aske not his meate he dyeth for hunger, and yf he aske, he dyeth for shame: and algates necessite cōstrayneth him to aske. And therfore sayth Salomon, that better is to dye, than for to haue such pouerte And as the same Salomō saieth: Better it is to dye of bytter dethe, than for to lyue in such wyse. By these resons that I haue sayd vnto you, & by many other resons that I couldе say, I graunt you that richesses ben good, to hem that hem well gete, and to hem that wel vsen tho richesses: And therfore wol I shewe you how ye shal behaue you in gatheryng of richesses, & in what maner ye shullen vse hem.

First ye shal get hem without great desyre, by good leyser, sokingly and not ouer hastely, for a man that is to desyrous to gette richesse, habandoneth him first to theft and to al other

yuels. And therfore saith Salomon: he that hasteth him to besily to werr riche, he shal be non innocent. He saith also, that the rychesse that hastely cometh to a man, sone and lightly gothe & passeth from a man, but that richesse that cometh lytel & lytel, wexeth alwaye and multiplyeth. And sir, ye shall gette rychesse by your wytte and by your trauayle, vnto youre profyte, and that wythout wronge or harme doyng to anye other persone: for the lawe saythe, there maketh no man hym selfe ryche, yf he do harme to an other wyght, thys is to say: that nature defendeth and forbydeth by right, that no man make hym selfe riche vnto the harme of a nother persone. And Tullius saith, that no sorowe ne no drede of dethe, ne nothyng þ maye fall vnto a man, is so moche ayenst nature, as a man to encrease his owne profyte, to the harme of an other man. And though the great and myghtye men, gette richesses more lyghtly than thou, yet shalt thou not be idel ne slowe to do thy profyte, for thou shalt in al wyse flye idelnesse. For Salomon sayethe, that idelnesse techeth a man to do many yuels. And the same Salomon sayth, that he that trauayleth and beseeth hym to tylthe his londe, shall eete breed: but he that is vdell and calleth him to no besynesse ne occupacyon, shall fall in to poouerte & dye for hunger.

And he that is idell & slowe, can neuer fynde conuenable tyme for to do his profyte. For there is a dectiftyer sayethe, that the vdel man excuseth him in wynter, by cause of the great colde, and in sommer by cause of the heete. For these causes sayethe Caton, maketh and enclyne you not ouer moche for to slepe, for ouer moche idelnesse nourysheth and causeth many vyces. And therfore saythe sayntt Jerom, do some good dedes, that the deuel which is our enemy, ne fynde you not vnoccupyed, for the deuel ne taketh not lyghtly vnto his werking such as he fyndeth occupyed in good workes.

Than thus, in getting richesses ye muste flye idelnesse. And afterwarde ye shull vse the rychesses, which ye haue gote by your wyt and by youre trauayle, in suche maner, that men holde you not to scarce ne to sparyng, ne sole large, that is to say, ouer large a spender: for right as menne blame an auaricyous man by cause of his scarcite & chynchery, in the same wise is he to blame that spendeth ouer largely And therfore saith Caton: vse (sayethe he) the richesses that thou hast gotte in such maner, that men may haue no mater ne cause to cal the nother wyzetche ne chynch: for it is grete shame to a man to haue a poore herte and a ryche purse. He sayethe also, the goodes that thou hast gote, vse them by measure, that is to say, spende mesurably, for they that lyuyng wast and dispende the goodes that they haue, whan they haue no more propre of her owne, than they shape hem to take the goodes of an other man. I say than that ye shall flye auarice, vsyng your rychesse in suche maner, that men saye not that your rychesses ben buryed, but that ye haue hem in your myght & in your weldyng. For a wyse man reproeueth the auaryrous man, and sayethe thus in thys verse two. Wherto and why burieth a man his goodes by his great auarice, and knoweth well that nedes he must dye, for dethe is the ender of curry man, as in this persone lyeth. And in wher cause or encheson ieopardeth he hym, & knyttyth he him so fast vnto his goodes, that all his wyttes mowe not diseuer him, ne departe him fro his goodes, and knoweth he, or ought to know, þ whan he is dede, he shal no thynge beare with him out of this world. And therfore sayth sayntt Augustyn, that an auaryrous man is lykened vnto helle, that the more it swalowethe, þ more desyre it hath to swalowe and deuoure. And as well as þ it cleped vertue to be called an auaryrous man or chynche, as well shoulde ye hope and purpose you in suche a wyse, that men call you not foole large. Therfore sayth Caton, The goodes of thyne house ne shulde not be to dere ne to pere so close, but that they myght be opened by pyte and be honourably, that is to say, to yeue hem parte that haue grete nede of thy goodes. Thy goodes shulde not be so open to be cause of mens goodes. After wardes in getting of youre richesses and in vsyng hem, ye shall alway haue thre thynges in your herte, that is to say, our lorde god, conscience, & good name. First ye shall haue god in youre herte, and in no richesse ye shulde do any thyng, which may in any maner displese god your creatour and maker. For after the wordes of Salomon, it is better to haue a lytel good with the loue of god, than to haue moche good and tresour, and lese the loue of his lorde god. And the prophete saithe, that better it is to be a good man, and haue lytel good & treasour, than to be holden a shrewe, and haue greate richesse. And yet I saye furthermore, that ye shulde al-

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waye do your besynesse to get you richesses, so that ye get hem with good conscyence. And the apostle saith, that there nys thyng in this worlde, of whiche we shoulde haue so great ioy, as whan oure conscience berreth vs good wytnesse. And the wyse man saith: ꝑ the substaunce of a man is full good, whan synne is not in mans conscience. Afterwarde in getynge of youre richesses and in vsyng of hem, ye muste haue great besynesse and great dylygence, that your good name be alwaye kepte and conserued. For Salomon sayth he, that better it is, & more it auayleth a man to haue a good name, than for to haue manye ryches: And therfore he sayth in an other place. Do great dylygence sayth Salomon, in kepynge of thy frendes and of thy good name, for it shall lenger abyde with the than any tresour, be it neuer so precyous. And certes he shulde not be called a great gentylman, that after god & good conscience, al thynges lefte, ne herke bis dylygence & besynesse to kepe his good name. And Caliodor sayth he, that it is a synne of a gentell herte, whan a man loseth and defyeth to haue a good name. And therfore saith saint Augustyn, that there bene two thynges that ben ryght necessary & also profytable, and that is good conscience, & good loue, that is to sayt: good conscience to the dame persone inwarde, and good loue for thy neyghbour outwarde. And he that trusteth him so muche in his good conscyence, that he defyeth & letteth at nought his good name, is lyke and recketh not though he kepe not his good name, nyne but a cruel churle.

And notwithstandynge I shewed you howe ye shulde be in getynge richesses, & howe ye shulde vse hem: and I se wel that for ꝑ cause that ye haue set your richesses, ye wol moue warre and bataylle. I counsayle you that ye begyn no warre in cause of youre richesses, for they ne suffyse nat wetres to maintayne. And therfore sayth a philosopher: That man that desyreth and wolde algates haue warre, shall neuer haue sufficiaunce: for the richer that he is, ꝑ greater dispence shall he make, yf he wol haue worshyp & victorie. And Salomon sayth, that the greater richesses that a man hath, ꝑ more dyspendours he hath. And therfore sir, al be it so that for your richesses ye may haue moch folke, yet behoueth it not, ne it is not good to begyn warre, where as ye may in other manere haue peace, vnto youre worshyp & profyte: For the victorye of batayls ꝑ ben in this worlde, lieth not in great nombre or multytude of people, ne in the vertue of man, but it lyeth in the wyl and in the honde of our lorde God almyghty. And therfore Judas Machabee, which was goddes knyght, whan he shulde fyght against his aduersari, that had a greater nombre and a greater multytude of folke, & stronger than was his people of Machabe, yet he recomforted his lytel company, and sayd right in this wyse: Also lyghtly sayd he, may our lorde god almyghty yeue victorye to a fewe folke, as to many folke, for the victorye of a batayle cometh not by the great nombre of people; but it cometh from our lorde god of heauen. And dere sir, for as moche as there is no man certayne, if it be worthy ꝑ god yeue him victorie or not, after that Salomon sayth, therfore euery man shuld gretly drede warres to begyn: and bycause that in batayles fall manye perylls, and happeth other while, that as soone is the great man slayne as the lytell man. And as it is wrytten in the second boke of kynges: The dedes of batayles ben auenturous & nothyng certayn, for as lyghtly is one hurt with a spere as an other: and for ther is great peryll in warre, therfore shoulde a man fere and eschue warre in as muche as a man may goodly. For Salomon sayth, he that loueth peryll, shall fall in peryll.

After that dame Prudence had spoken in this maner, Melibe answered and sayd. I do wel dame Prudence, that by your faire wordes and your resons that ye haue shewed me, that ꝑ warre lyketh you nothyng, but I praye you yet herde your counsayle or ye I shall do in this nede.

Certes sayd she I counsayle you that ye accorde with your aduersaries, & that ye haue peace with hem. For saynt James sayth in his Epistel: that by concorde and peace smal richesses wexe great: and by debate & discorde riches decay. And ye knowe wel, that one of the greatest & moste soueraine thynge ꝑ is in this world, is peace and peace. And therfore sayth our lord Jesu Christ to his apostles, in this wyse: wel happy ben they, that loue and purchase peace, for they be called ꝑ children of god. Ah, sayd Melibe, now see I wel, that ye loue not myne honoure ne my worshyppe. Ye knowe wel that myn aduersaris haue begon this debate & warre by their outrage. And ye se wel ꝑ they ne requere me nat of peace,

ne they aske not to be reconciled. Woll ye thā that I go meke me, & obey me to hem, & crye hem mercy? Forsothe that were not my worshyp, for right as men say, ouer great hūblenesse engendreth dispraysynge, so fareth it by to great humilite or mekenesse.

Than began dame Prudence to make semblant of wrath, & sayd: Certes sir, saue youre grace. I loue youre honour & profyte as I do myne owne, & euer haue do: ye ne none other trewer se the contrarye. And yet, yf I had sayd, that ye shulde haue purchased peace & reconsiliyacion, I ne had moche misstake me, ne sayde amysse. For the wyse man sayth: the dyscencion begynneth by another man, & the reconsiling beginneth by thy selfe. And the prophet sayth: flye shrewdnesse, and do goodnes, seke peace & folowe it, in asmoche as in the is. Yet say I not, that ye shuld rather pursue to your aduersaris for peace, than they shuld to you: For I knowe wel that ye ben so hard herted, that ye wol do nothyng for me. And Salomō sayth: he that hath ouer harde an herte, he at last shall mysshappe or mysbetide.

Whan Melibe had herd dame Prudence make semblaunt of wrath, he said in this wise. Dame I praye you, that ye be not displeased of thing that I say, for ye knowe well that I am angry & wrothe, and that is no wonder: & they that ben wroth, wot not well what they do, ne what they saye. Therfore the prophete saith: that troubled eyen haue no clere sighte. But saye and counsaile me as you lyketh, for I am redy to do right as ye wol desyre: And if ye repreue me of my folye, I am the more holden to loue and praise you. For Salomon sayth, that he that repreueth him ꝑ doth foly, he shal fynde greater grace than he that discreueth him by swete wordes.

Than sayde dame Prudence, I make no semblaunt of wrath ne of anger, but for your great profite, for Salomon saith: he is more worth, that repreueth or chydeth a fole for his folye, shewyng him semblaūt of wrathe, than he that supporteth him and prayseth hi in his misdoyng, and laugheth at his folye. And this same Salomon sayth afterwarde: That by ꝑ sorowful vilage of a man, that is to say, by the sorie & heuy countenaūce of a man, the fole correcteth and amendeth him selfe.

Than said Melibe, I shall not conne aunswere vnto so manye faire reasons as ye put to me and shewe: say shortly your wyl & your counsaile, and I am al redy to performe and fulfyll it. ¶ Than dame Prudence discouered all her wyll vnto hym and sayde. I counsayle you (said she) aboue all thinges, that ye make peace betwene god and you, and be reconsyled vnto hym and to his grace, for as I haue saide you here before, God hath suffred you to haue this tribulacion & disese for your synnes: and yf ye do as I saye you, God wol sende youre aduersaries vnto you, and make hem fall at your fete, redy to do your wyl and your cōmaundement. For Salomon saithe, whan the cōdycyon of man is pleasaunte and lyking to god, he chaungeth the hertes of the mans aduersaries, and constrayneth hem to beseche him of peace & of grace. And I praye you let me speke with your aduersaries priuely, for they shall not knowe that it be of your wyl or your assent: And than whan I knowe theyr will and their entent, I maye counsayle you the more surely.

Dame saide Melibe, dothe your wyll and your liking, for I put me holly in your dispo sycion and ordynaunce.

Than dame Prudence, whan she sawe the good wyll of her husbonde, delybered & toke aduise in her selfe, thynkyng howe she might bring this nede vnto a good conclusyon and to a good ende: And whan she sawe her tyme, she sente for these aduersaryes to come vnto her in a priue place. And shewed wysely vnto hem the greate goodes that come of peace, & the great harmes & perils that ben in warre, and sayd to hem in a goodly maner: how that hem ought haue great repentaunce of the iniury and wrong, that they had done to Melibeus her lorde, & vnto her & to her doughter.

And whan they herd the goodlye wordes of dame Prudence, they were so supprised & rauished, and had so gret ioye of her, that wonder was to tell. ¶ Ah, lady (sayde they) ye haue shewed vnto vs the blyssynge of swetnesse after the saying of Dauid the prophet. For ꝑ reconsilyng which we be not worthy to haue in no manere. But we oughte require it with great cōtricion and humilite, that ye of youre goodnesse haue presented vnto vs. Nowe se we wel, that the science and connynge of Salomon is full trewe, for he sayth: That swete wordes multiply & encrease frendes, and maketh shrewes to be debonaire and meke.

Certes (said they) we put our deede and all

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our mater & cause, al holly in your good wyl, and been redy to obey at the cómaundement of our lorde Melibeus And therefore dere & benigne lady: we praye and beseche you, as meekely as we can and maye, that it lyke vn-to your great goodnesse, to fulfil i dede, your goodly wordes. For we consider and knowe, that we haue offended and greued our lorde Melibeus out of measure: so forforthe ỳ we be nat of power to make him amendes. And therfore we oblige & binde vs & our frendes, for to do all at hys wyll and commaundemente; but paraventure he hath suche heuynesse, and suche wrath to vs warde, bycause of our offence, that he wol enoyne vs such a payne, as we mowe not beare ne sustayne, And therfore noble lady, we beseche your womanly pite, to take suche aduisement in this nede, that we ne our frendes be nat dishertred ne distroyed, through our foly.

Certes (sayd Prudẽce) it is an harde thing and right perillous, that a man put him al vtterly in arbytracion & iudgement, and in the might & power of his enemie: For Salomon sayth: tructh me, & yeueth credence to ỳ I shal say: Ne yeueth neuer ỳ power ne gouernaũce of thy goodes, to thy son, to thy wyfe, to thy frende, ne to thy brother: ne yeue thou neuer might ne mastry ouer thy body while thou liuest. Nowe, sith he defendeth ỳ a man shulde nat yeue to his brother ne to his frende, the might of his body. By a strõger reason he defendeth & forbideth a man to yeue him selfe to his enemye. And natheless I coũsayle you ỳ ye mistrust nat my lorde: for I wote wel and knowe verely, that he is debonair & meke, large, curteis, and nothing desirous ne coutrous of goodes ne riches. For there is nothinge in this worlde ỳ he desireth, saue only worshyp and honoure. Furthermore I knowe, and am right sure, ỳ he shal nothinge do in this nede, without my counsaile: and I shal so werke in this case, that by the grace of oure lorde god, ye shal be reconsiled vnto vs.

Than sayd they with one voyce, worshypful lady we put vs and our goodes all fully in your wyl and disposicion, and ben redy to come, what daye that it liketh vnto your noblesse to limite vs or assyne vs for to make our obligacion & bonde, as stronge as it lyketh vnto your goodnesse, that we mowe fulfyl the wyl of you & of my lorde Melibe.

When dame Prudẽce had herd the answere of these men, she bad hem go ayen priuely, & she returned to her lorde Melibe, & tolde him how she foũde his aduersaries ful repentaũt knowleging full lowly her synnes & trespas, and how they were redy to suffer al payne, requiring & prayeng him of mercy and pyte.

Than said Melibe, he is wel worthy to haue pardone & foryeuenesse of hys synne, that excuseth not his sinne, but knowlegeth and repenteth him, asking indulgẽce. For Senese saith, there is the remission and forgyuenesse, where as the confessions: for confession is neighbour to innocence. And therfore I assent and confirme me to haue peace, but it is good that we do nought without the assente and wyl of our frendes.

Than was Prudẽce right gladde and ioyful, and sayde: Certes sir, ye haue well and goodly answerde: for right as by the counsayle, assent, and helpe of your frendes, ye haue be steered to venge you and make warre: Right so, without her counsayle shall ye not accorde you, ne haue peace with your aduersaries. For the lawe sayth: there is nothyng so good, by way of kinde, as a thynge to be vnbounde by him that it was ybounde.

Than dame Prudence, without delay or tarieng, sent anone her messanger, for her synfolke and her olde frendes, whiche that were trewe and wise: and tolde hem by order, in the presence of Melibe, al ỳ mater, as it is aboue expressed and declared. And prayd hem that they would say their aduise and counsayle, what best were to do in this nede. And when Melibeus frendes had taken her aduyse and deliberacion of the forsayd mater, & had examyned it by greate besynesse and dylygence. They yaue full counsayle for to haue peace & rest, & that Melibe shulde receyue with good hert his aduersaries, to forgyuenesse & mercy.

And when dame Prudence had herde that assent of her lorde Melibe, and the counsayle of his frendes accorde with her wyl and her entencion, she was wonderly glad in her hert, and sayd. There is an olde prouerbe (sayde she) That the goodnesse that thou mayste do this day, do it, and abide it not, ne delay it nat tyll the nexte daye. And therfore I counsayle, that ye sende your messẽgers, suche as be discrete and wise, vnto your aduersaries: telling hem on your behalfe, that if they wol treat of peace and accorde, that they shape hem without delay or tarieng, to come vnto vs: why-

che thing perfourmed was in dede. And when theſe treſpaſſours, and repenting folke of her folyes, that is to ſay, the aduerſaries of Melibeus, had herde what theſe meſſengers ſaid vnto hem, they were right gladdе and toyful, and anſwerde ful meekely and benygnely, yelding grace and thākes to her lorde, Melibee, and to al his companye: and hope hem without delaye to go with the meſſengers, and obeyed the commaundement of her lorde Melibeus. And right anone they toke her way to the court of Melibe, and toke with hem ſome of their true frendes, to make fayth for hem, and for to be her borowes: And whan they were comen to the preſence of Melibe, he ſaid to hem theſe wordes. It ſtondeth thus, ſayd Melibe, and ſothe it is, that cauſeleſſe & without ſkyll and reaſon, ye haue done great iniuries and wronges to me and my wyfe Prudēce, and to my doughter alſo, for ye haue entred in to my houſe by violence, and haue don ſuche outrage, that all men knowe well that ye haue deſerued dethe. And therfore woll I knowe and were of you, whether ye woll put the punyſhinge and the chaſtyſinge & the vengeaunce of this outrage, in the wyl of me and of my wyfe, or ye wol not.

Then the wiſeſt of hem thre anſwerde for hem al, and ſayd. Sir, ſaid he, we knowe wel that we ben vnworthy to come to the courte of ſo great a lorde and ſo worthy as ye be, for we haue ſo greatly miſtaken vs, and haue offended and agylted in ſuch wiſe agayne your high lordeſhip, that truely we haue deſerued the dethe, but yet for the great goodneſſe & debonaire, that al the worlde witneſſeth of your perſon, we ſubmitte vs to the excellence and benignite of your gracious lordeſhippe, & ben redy to obey to al your cōmaundementes, beſechynge you, that of youre merciable pite ye woll conſider our great repentaunce, & lowe ſubmiſſion, & graunte vs forȝeueneſſe of our outragious treſpaſſe and offence: For wel we knowe, that your lyberall grace and mercye ſtretche ferther in to the goodneſſe, than don our outragious giltes and treſpaſſes into the wickednеſſe. Al be it ỳ curſedly & dampnably we haue agylted agaynſt your high lordſhip.

Than Melibee tooke hem vp fro the grounde full benygnely, and receyued her obligacions and her bondes by her othes vpon her pledges and borowes, and aſſyned hem a certayne day to returne vnto his court for to receyue and accept ſentence and iudgement ỳ Melibeus wold cōmaunde to be don on hem, by ỳ cauſes aforſaid, whiche thinges ordayned, euery man returned to his houſe.

And when dame Prudēce ſawe her tyme, ſhe fained & aſked her lorde Melibe, what vengeaūce he thought take on his aduerſaries.

To whiche Melibe anſwerde, & ſaid: Certes (ſayd he), I thinke and purpoſe me fully to diſherite hem of al that euer they haue, and for to put them in exile for euer.

Certes ſaid dame Prudēce, this were a cruell ſentence, and muche ayenſt reaſon. For ye be riche ynoughe, and haue no nede of other mennes riches. And ye might lightly in this wiſe gete you a couetous name, whiche is a vicious thing, and ought be eſchwed of euery good man. For after the ſayenge of ỳ apoſtel. Couetiſe is rote of al harmes. And therfore it were better to you leſe ſo muche good of your owne, than for to take of their good in this maner. For better it is to leſe good with worſhyp, than to wyn good with vylanye and ſhame. And euery man ought to do his diligence and his buſineſſe, to gete him a good name. And yet ſhal he not only buſy hym in keping his good name, but he ſhal alſo enforce him alwaye to do ſome thinge, by which he may renewe hys good name. For it is writen, that the old good loſe of a man or good name, is ſoone gon and paſſe, whan it is not renewed. And as touchynge, that ye ſay that ye woll exile your aduerſaries: that thynketh me muche ayenſt reaſon, and out of meaſure, conſidryng the power, that they haue yeue you vpon them ſelfe. And it is writen: ỳ he is worthy to loſe his priuylege, that miſuſeth the might and power that is giuen hym. And I ſette caſe, ye might enioyne hem that payne by right & lawe, whiche I trowe ye may not do: I ſaye, ye might not put it to execution, for peraduenture than it were lyke to turne to the werre, as it was before. And therfore if ye wol that men do you obeiſaūce, ye muſt demean you more courteiſly, that is to ſay: ye muſt yeue more eaſy ſentences and iugement. For it is writen: he that moſt courteiſly commaundeth, to him men moſt obey. And therfore I pray you, that in thys neceſſite and in this nede, ye caſte ye to ouercome your herte. For as Seneca ſayth: he that ouercometh his herte, ouercometh twiſe. And Tully ſayth: there is nothing ſo cōmendable in a great

great lorde, as when he is debonaire & meke, and apeseth him lightly. And I pray you that ye wol nowe forbere to do vengeaunce, in suche a maner, that youre good name maye be kept and conserued, and that men may haue cause & mater to prayse you of pyte & mercy: and þ ye haue no cause to repent you of thige that is done. For Senec sayeth: he ouercometh in an yuell maniere, that repenteth hym of his victorye. Wherfore I pray you, let mercy be in your hert, to theffecte and entent, that god almightie haue mercye vpon you in hys last iugement. For saint James sayeth in his Epistell: iugement without mercy shall be do to him, that hath no mercy of another wight.

Whan Melibe had herde the great skylles and reasons of dame Prudence, and her wise informacions and teachinges, his hert gan enclyne to the wyll of his wife: consydringe her trewe entent, confirmed hym anon and assented fully to worke after her counsayle: & thanked god, of whom procedeth al goodnesse and vertue, that hym had sent a wife of so greate discretion. And whan the day came that hys aduersaries shulde apeare in his presence, he spake to hem goodly, and sayde in this wise.

Al be it so, that of your pride and high presumption and folye, and of your negligence & vnconninge, ye haue misborne you, and trespaced vnto me, yet for as mikell as I se and beholde your greate humilyte, and that ye be sory and repentaunt of your gyltes, it constrayneth me to do you grace & mercy: Wherfore I receyue you to my grace, & forgyue you holly al the offences, iniuries, and wronges, that ye haue don ayenst me and myne, to theffecte and ende, that god of his endlesse mercy woll at the tyme of our dienge forgyue vs our gyltes, that we haue trespaced to hi in this wrecched worlde. For doutlesse if we be sory and repentaunt for the sinnes and gyltes, whiche we haue trespaced in þ sight of our lord god: he is so fre and so merciable, that he wol forgyue vs our gyltes, and bring vs to the blisse that neuer shal haue ende. AMEN.

Here endeth the tale of Chaucer, and here folowerh the Monkes prologue.

Whan ended was the tale of Melibee
And of Prudence, and her benignytee
Our host sayde, as I am faythful man
And by the precious corps Madrian
I had leuer than a barel of ale
That good lefe my wyfe had herde this tale
For she nothing is of suche patience
As was this Melibeus wyfe Prudence
By goddes bones, when I bere my knaues
She bringeth me the great clubbed staues
And crieth, slee the dogges euery chone
And breke bothe backe and euery bone
And if that any neighbour of myne
Wol not in churche to my wife enclyne
Or be so hardy, to her to trespace
Wha she cometh home, she rampeth in my face
And crieth false cowarde wicke thy wyfe
By corpus domini, I wol haue thy knyfe
And thou shalt haue my distaf, and go spinne
Fro day tyl nyght, she wol thus begynne.
Alas she sayth, that euer she was shape
To wedde a mylksop, a cowarde ape
That wol be ouerlayde with euery wight
Thou darst not stonde by thy wiues right
This is my lyfe, but if that I wol fight
And out at doze, anon I moste me dight
And els I am lost, but yf that I
Be lyke a wylde lyon, fole hardy
I wot wel she wol do me slee some day
Some neighbour, and than go my way
For I am perylous with knyfe in honde
Al be it that I dare not her withstonde
For she is bigge in armes by my fayth
That shal he fynde, that her misdoth or sayth
But let vs passe away from this matere.
Sir lorde he sayde, sir mōke be merry of chere
For ye shal tell vs a tale trewely
Lo Rochester stondeth here fast by
Ride forth myn own lord, breke not our game
But by my trouth I knowe not your name
Wheder I shal cal you my lorde dan John
Or dan Thomas, dan Robert, or dan Albon
Or of what house be ye, by your father kyn
I vowe to god, thou hast a ful fayre chyn
It is a gentle pasture ther thou gost
Thou art not lyke a pynaunt or a ghost
Vppon my fayth thou arte some officere
Some worthy sergeu, or some Celerere
For by my fathers soule, as to my dome
Thou art a maister, when thou art at home

No

No poore cloysterer, ne no poore nouyse
But a gouernour ware and wyse
And therwith of brawne and of bones
A wel faring person for the nones
I praye to god yeue him confusion
That first the brought in to religion
Thou wouldest be a tredefoule aright
Haddest thou as great leue, as ꝑ haste might
To perfourme al thy lust in engendrure
Thou haddest begotten many a creature
Alas, why weretest thou so wyde a cope
God yeue me sorowe, and I were pope
Not onely thou, but euery myghty man
Though he were shoe high vpon his pan
Shulde haue a wife, for al this world is lorn
Religion hath take vp al the corne
Of tredyng, and bosel men ben shrimpes
Of feble trees there cometh wretched impes
This maketh that our heires be so slender
And feble, that they may not wel engender
This maketh that our wiues wol assay
Religious folke, for they may better pay
Of Venus payementes, than mowe we
God wote no lusshebourghs pave ye
But be not wroth my lorde, though I play
Ful ofte in game a sothe haue I herde say.
This worthy monke toke al in pacience
And sayd, I wol do my diligence
As ferre as sowneth in to honestee
To tell you a tale, ꝑe two or thre
And if ye lyste to herken hyderwarde
I wol you sayne, the lyfe of saint Edwarde
Or els tragidies first I wol tell
Of whiche I haue an hundred in my cell.
Tragydy is to tel a certayne story
As olde bokes maken memory
Of hem that stode in great prosperite
And be fallen out of hye degre
In to misery, and ended wretchedly
And they ben versified comenly
Of fyre fete, whiche men cal exametron
In prose eke ben endited many on
And in metre, many a sondrye wyse
Lo, this ought ynoughe to suffyse
Nowe herkeneth, if you lyste for to here
But first I beseche you in this matere
Though I by order tel not these thynges
Be it of Popes, Emperours, or kynges
After her ages, as men writen fynde
But tellen hem, some before & some behynde
As it cometh nowe to my remembraunce
Haue me excused of myne ignoraunce.

Here endeth the Monkes prologue, and here beginneth hys tale.

I wyll bewayle in maner of tragedy
The harme of hem that stoden in hye degre
And fyll, so that there was no remedy
To bring hem out of her aduersite
For certayne, whan that fortune lyste to flye
There may no man of her ꝑ course withholde
Lete no man trust on blynde prosperite
Beth ware by this ensample yonge & olde

Lucifer.

Of Lucifer, though he an angel were
And nat a man, at him wyll I begynne
For though fortune may nat angel dere
From hye degre, yet fel he for his synne
Down in to hell, where he is yet inne
O Lucifer, brightest of angels all
Nowe art thou Sathanas, ꝑ maist not twin
Out of misery, in whiche thou art fall.

Adam.

To Adam, in the feide of Damascene
With goddes owne finger wrought was he
And not begoten of mannes sperm vncleene
And welte al paradise sauing o tree
Neuer worldely man had so hye degre
As Adam, til he for misgouernaunce
Was dryuen out of his high prosperite
To labour and to hell, and to mischaunce

Sampson.

To Sampson, whiche ꝑ was annunciate
By the angel, longe or his natiuite
And was to god almighty consecrate
And stode in nobles, whyle he might se
Was neuer suche another, as was he
To speke of strength, and therto hardynesse
But to his wiues tolde he his secre (nesse
Through which he slough hym for wretched

Sampson this noble & mighty champion
Without wepen, saue his handes twey
He slough and al to rente the lyon
Towarde his wedding, walkyng by the wey
His false wife coulde hym so please and play
Tyl she his counsayle knewe, & she vnkewe
Vnto his foes, his counsayle gan bewray
And him forsoke, and toke another newe

In

¶ An hundred foxes toke Sampson for yre
And al her tayles he togyther bonde
And set the foxes tayles al on fyre
For he in euery tayle hath put a bronde
And they brent all the cornes in that londe
And her olyues, and her vynes eke
A thousād men eke he slough with his honde
And had no wepen, but an asse cheke.

¶ Whā they were slayne, so thrysted hym ỹ he
Was wel nye lorne, for whiche he gan to prey
That god wold of hys payne, haue some pite
And sende him drinke, or els mote he dey
And of this asse cheke, that was so drey
Out of a wange tothe, sprange anon a well
Of whiche he dronke ynough, shortly to sey
Thus halpe him god, as Judicum can tell.

¶ By very force, at Gasa on a nyght
Wayte the Philistiens of that cite
The gates of the towne, he hath vp plyght
And on his backe, y caried hem hath he
Hyghe on an hyll, where as men myght hem se
O noble myghty Sampson, lefe and dere
Had thou not told to women thy secre
In al this worlde ne had be thy pere.

¶ This Sāpson neither sider drāke ne wyne
Ne on his heed came rasour none ne shere
By precepte of the messangere dyuine
For al his strength in his heeres were
And fully twenty yere by yere
Of Israel, he had the gouernaunce
But after soon shall he wepe many a tere
For women shal bring him to myschaunce

¶ Vnto his lemman Dalyda he tolde
That in his heeres, al his strength lay
And falsely to his foes she him solde
And slepyng in her barme vpon a day
She made to clippe or shere his heres away
And made his fomen all his craft espyen
And whan that they him fonde in suche araye
They bounde him faste, and put out his eyen

¶ But er his heeres were clypped or ishaue
There was no bonde that myght him bynde
But nowe is he put in prison in a caue
Where as they made him at ỹ querne grinde
O noble Sāpson, strongest of mankynde
O whilom iuge in glory and rychesse
Now mayste thou wepe wt thyn eyen blynde
Sith ỹ art frō wele fal in to wretchednesse.

¶ The ende of this caytife was, as I shal sey
His fomen made a feest vpon a daye
And made him, as their fole before hem play
And this was in a temple of great araye
But at the last he made a foule a fraye
For he two pilers shoke, & made hem fall
And downe fel the temple al, and there it lay
And sloughe him selfe, and eke his fomen al

¶ This is to say, the princes euery chone
And eke thre thousād bodies were ther slayn
With falling of the great temple of stone
Of Sampson wol I no more sayn
Beth ware by this ensample olde and playn
That no men tel her counsayle to her wiues
Of such thing as they wold haue secret fayn
If that it touche her lymmes or her lyues.

¶ Of Hercules.

¶ Of Hercules, the souerayne conqueroure
Syngen his werkes, laude, & hye renoun
For in his time, of strength he bare the floure
He sloughe and rafte the skyn of the lyon
And of the Centaurs, layde the boste adoun
He Harpias slewe, the cruel birdes fell
He the golden appels rafte fro the dragon
He dreuve out Cerberus the hounde of hell.

¶ He slewe the cruel tyraunt Busirus
He made his horse to frete hym flesh & bone
He sloughe the very serpent venemous
Of Achelous two hornes, brake he that one
And he slewe Cacus, in a caue of stone
He sloughe the gyaunt Antheus the stronge
He sloughe the grisly boze, and that anon
And bare his heed vpon his spere longe.

¶ Was neuer wight, sith the worlde began
That sloughe so many monsters, as dyd he
Through the wide worlde, his name ran
What for his strength and his bounte
And euery realme went he for to se
He was so stronge, ỹ no man might hym let
And at bothe the worldes endes, he Trophe
In stede of boundes, of brasse a pyllour set.

¶ A lemman had this noble champion
That hight Deianire, as fresh as May
And as clerkes make mencion
She hath him sent a shirte fresshe and gay
Alas this shirte, alas and wel away
Enuenemed was subtelly with all
That er he had wered it halfe a day
It made his flesche all fro his bones fall.

But

¶ But nathe lesse, some clerkes her excusen
By one that hight Nessus, that it maked
Be as be may, I wol her not accusen
But on his body, the shirte he ware al naked
Tyl the fleasche was with the venym slaked
And when he sawe none other remedye
In hote coles, he hath him selfe traked
For with no venim dayned he to dye.

¶ Thus sterfe this worthy mighty Hercules
Lo, who may trust in fortune any throwe
For him that folowerh al the worlde of pres
Or he be ware, is ofte layde ful lowe
Ful wise is he, that him selfe can knowe
Beware, for when that fortune lyste to glose
Than wayteth she, her man downe to throwe
By suche a way, as he wouldе leste suppose.

¶ Nabugodonosor.

The mighty trone, the precious tresore
The glorious septer, & royal maieste
That had the kyng Nabugodonosore
With tonge vnneth may discryued be
He twise wanne Hierusalem, that eyte
The vessel of the temple he with him lad
At Babilon was his souerayne se
In whiche his glory and his delite he had.

¶ Of Hierusalem, he dyd do gelde anone
The fayrest children of the blode royall
And made eche of hem to ben his thrall
Amonge all other Danyell was one
That was the wisest of euerychone
For he the dremes of the kyng expowned
Where as in Caldee clerkes were there none
That wyst to what fyne his dreme sowned

¶ This proude king let make a statu of golde
Sixty cubites longe, and seuen in brede
To whiche ymage, bothe yonge and olde
Cõmawnded he loute, and hawe in drede
Lo ma fornays, ful of flames rede
He shoulde be deed, that wouldе not obey
But neuer wolde assent to that dede
Danyell, ne his yonge felowes twey

¶ This kyng of kynges, proude and elate
Wende god, that sitteth in maieste
Ne myght hym nat byreve of his estate
But sodaynly he loste his dignyte
And lyke a beest, him semed for to be
And ete hey as an ore, and laye therout
In rayn, with wilde beestes walked he
Tyl a certayn tyme was come about

And like an Egles fethers were his heres
And his neyles lyke brides clawes were
God released him at certayne peres
And yaue him wit, & than with many a tere
He thonked God, and al his lyfe in fere
Was he, to do amysse, or more trespace
And er that he layde was on his bere
He knew þ god was ful of myght and grace.

¶ Balthasar.

His sonne, which þ hight Balthasar
That held þ reign after his faders day
He by his fader couldе not beware
For proude he was of hert, and of aray
And eke an ydolaster was he ferye
His hygh estate, assured him in pride
But fortune cast him down, & there he laye
And sodainly his reigne gan deuyde

¶ A feest he made vnto his lordes all
Upon a tyme, he made hem blyth be
And than his officers gan he call
Goth bring forth the vessels (qõ he)
Which that my father, in his prosperite
Out of the temple of Hierusalem byraste
And to our goddes thonken we
Of honour, that our elders with vs laste

¶ His wife, his lordes, and his concubynes
Aye dronken, whiles her appetytes laste
Out of this noble vessels, sondry wynes
And on a wall, this kynge his eyen caste
And saw an hõde armeles, that wrote faste
For feare of whiche he quoke, & syghed sore
This honde þ Balthasar made so sore agaste
Wrote (Mane techel phares) and no more

¶ In al that londe, magycien was ther none
That coude expowne what this letter ment
But Danyel expowned it anone
And sayd, kyng, god thy father sent
Glory and honour, reigne, tresour, & rent
And he was proude, & nothing god he drad
And therfore great wrath god vpon him sent
And him byraste the reigne that he had

¶ He was out cast of mans companye
With asses was his habytacion
And ete hey as a beest, in wete and dreye
Tyl that he knewe, by grace and by reson
That god of heuen hath domination
Ouer euery reygne, and euery creature
And than had god of him compassion
And him restored his reigne and his figure.

¶ Ex

Eke ꝑ that art his sonne, art proude also
And knowest al these thynges priuely
And art rebell to god, and his foe
Thou dranke eke of his vessells boldly
Thy wyfe eke, and thy wenches synfully
Dronke of the same vessels sondrie wynis
And herryed false goddes cursedly
Therfore to the shapen great payne is

This honde was sent fro god, ꝑ on the wall
Wrote Mane techel phares truste me
Thy reigne is done, thou wotest not al
Deuyded is thy realme, and it shall be
To Medes and to Perciens (quod he)
And that same night, the kyng was slawe
And Darius occupied his dignyte
Though he ther to had neither right ne lawe.

Lordynges, here ensample mowe ye take
Howe that in lordshyp is no sykernesse
For whan that fortune wol a man forsake
She bereth away his reigne, and his rychesse
And eke his frendes, both more and lesse
And what man hath frēdes, through fortune
Mishap wol make him enemyes I gesse
This prouerbe is ful sothe, & ful commune.

Zenobia.

Zenobia of Palmerye quene
(As writeth Petrycens of her noblesse)
So worthy was in armes, and so kene
That no wight passed her in hardynesse
Ne in lynage, ne in none other gentylnesse
Of kynges blode of Perce she is discended
I saye that she had not most fayrenesse
But of her shap she might not be amended.

From her childhoode I fynd that she fledde
Offyce of woman, and to woode she went
And many a wylde herres bloode she shedde
With arowes brode, that she to hem sent
She was so swyfte, that she anon hem hent
And whan that she was elder, she would kyll
Lyons, Libardes, and Beres al to rent
And in her armes welde hem at her wyll.

She durst wylde beestes dennes seke
And renne in the mountaynes all the nyght
And slepe vnder a busshe, & she couthe eke
Wrastell by very force, and by very might
With any yong mā, were he neuer so wight
There might no thynge in her armes stonde
She kepte her maydenhed from euery wight
To no man dayned she to be bonde.

But at last, her frendes hath her maryed
To Odenat, a prince of that countre
Al were it so, that she hem longe tarryed
And ye shal understonde, how that he
Had suche fantasyes as had she
But natheless, whan they were knyt in fere
They lyued in loye and in felycite
Forsothe of hem had other lefe and dere

Saue one thyng, she nolde neuer assent
By no way, that he shulde by her lye
But ones, for it was her playne entent
To haue a childe, the world to multiplye
And also sone as she myght aspye
That she was not with childe with that dede
Than wolde she suffre him to do his fantasye
Eftesones, and not but ones out of drede.

And if she were with childe at that tasse
Nomore shuld he play that game
Tyl fully fourty dayes were passe
Than wolde she ones suffre him the same
Al were this Odenat wilde or tame
He gate no more of her, for thus she sayde
It was to wyues lechery and shame
In other case, if men with hem playde

Two sonnes by this Odenat had she
The which she kept in vertue and lettrure
But now vnto our tale turne we
I saye that so worthyful a creature
And wise therwith, and large with mesure
So penyble in werre, and curteys eke
Ne more labour might in werre endure
Was non, though al this world mē wold seke

Her riche arayе, ne myght not be tolde
As wel in vessel as in her clothyng
She was al cladde in perry and in golde
And eke she lefte not for none huntyng
To haue of sondry tonges folke knowyng
Whan that she leyser had for to entende
To lerne bokes was al her lykyng
How she in vertue her lyfe myght dispende

And shortly of this story for to trete
As doughty was her husbonde as she
So ꝑ they conquered many reignes greate
In the Orient, with many a fayre cyte
Apperteynaunt vnto the mastie
Of Rome, & with strength held them fast

O.i. Vn-

Ne neuer might her foe men do her flee
Al the while that Odenates dayes laste

Her batayles, who so lyste hem for to rede
Agayne Sapor the kyng, and other mo
And howe al this proces fyll in dede
Why she cóquered, & what title she had therto
And after of her mischefe and of her wo
Howe that she was besieged, and take
Let him to my mayster Petrarke go
That writeth ynough of this, I undertake

¶ When Odenat was deed, she mightyly
The realmes held, & with her owne honde
Agaynst her foes she fought truely
That ther was no prince ne kyng, in al ỹ lõde
But were glad, if they that grace fonde
That she ne shulde vpon his londe werrey
With her they made alyaunce by bonde
To be in peace, and let hem ryde and play

¶ The Emperour of Rome Claudius
Ne him before, the Romayne Galyen
Ne durste neuer be so corageous
Ne none Armen, ne none Egypcien
Ne Surrien, ne none Arabyen
Within the felde, that durst with her fyght
Lest ỹ she wolde him with her hondes sleen
Or with her meyne, put hem to flyght

¶ In kynges habyte went her sonnes two
As the heires of her realmes all
And Herman̄o and Timallo
Her names wer, as Perciens hem call
But aye fortune, hath in her hony gall
This mighty quene, may no while endure
Fortune out of her reigne made her to fal
To wretchednesse, and to myseuenture.

Aurelyan, when that the gouernaunce
Of Rome came in his hondes twey
He shope vpon this quene to do vengeaunce
And with his legions, he toke his wey
Towarde Zenobia, and shortly for to say
He made her flye, and at laste her hent
And fettered her, and eke her children tway
And wan the londe, & home to Rome he went

Amonge other thinges that he wan
Her chare, that of gold was wrought & pierre
This great Romayn, this Aurelian
Hath with him lad, that for men shulde se
Before his tryumphe walked she
With golden chaynes on her necke hongyng
Crowned she was, as after her degre
And ful of pierre charged her clothyng

¶ Alas fortune, she that whylom was
Dredeful to kynges, and to emperoures
Now gaureth al the people on her, alas
And she that helmed was in starke stoures
And wan by force townes stronge, & toures
Shal on her heed nowe werre auntrempyte
And she that bare the sceptre ful of floures
Shal beare a distaffe, her coste for to quyte.

¶ Nero.

Al though that Nero were as vycious
As any fende, ỹ lyeth fal lowe adoun
Yet he, as telleth vs Suetonius
Al this world had in subiection̄
Both este, and west, and Septentrion
Of rubyes, safyers, and of perles whyte
Were al his clothes broudred vp and down
For he in gemmes greatly gan delyte

More delycate, more pompous of aray
More proude, was neuer Emperour, than he
That like clothe that he had wered o day
After that tyme, he nolde it neuer se
Nettes of gold thrde had he great plente
To fysshe in Tiber, whan him lyst to play
His lustes were as lawe, in his degre
For fortune as his frende wolde him obay

He Rome brente for his delycacye
The Senatours he slewe vpon a day
To here how her wyues wold wepe & crye
And slowe his brother, & by his syster lay
His mother made he in a pyrouse aray
For he her wombe let slytte, to beholde
Where he conceyued was, so welaway
That he so lyte of his mother tolde

No teres out of his eyen, for that sight
Ne came, but sayd, a fayre woman was she
Great wonder is, that he coude or might
Be domisman, of her deed beaute
The wine to bringe him commaunded he
And dranke anon, non other wo he made
Whan might is ioyned vnto cruelte
Alas, to depe wyl the venyme wade

In youth a mayster had this emperour
To teche him letture, and curtesye
For of moralyte he was the floure

As in his tyme, but if his bokes lye
And whyles his maister had of him maistrye
He made him so conning and so souple
That longe tyme it was or tyrannye
Or any vyce, durste in him vncouple.

Nero his mayster was, of which I deuyse
Because Nero had of him suche drede
For he for his vices wold him chastyse
Discretly as by worde, and not by dede
For he wolde say, an emperour mote nede
Be vertuous, and hate tyrannye
For whiche he made him in a bathe to blede
In both his armes, tyl he must dye.

This Nero had eke of a customaunce
In youthe, ayenst his mayster to ryse
Which afterward, him thought gret grenaūce
Because he ofte wolde him chastise
Therfore he made him dye in this wyse
To chose in a bathe to dye in this manere
Rather than to haue a nother turmenyse
And thus hath Nero slayne his mayster dere

Now fel it so, that fortune lyste no longer
The hygh pride of Nero to cherysche
For tho he were stronge, yet was she stronger
She thought thus, by god I am to nyce
To set a man, that is fulfylled of vyce
In hye degre, and an emperour him call
By god out of his sete I wol him tryce
Whan he leste weneth, soonest shal he fall

The people rose vpon him on a nyght
For his defaute, and whan he it aspyed
Out of his dores anon he hath him dyght
Alone, and there he wende haue ben alyed
He knocked fast, & aye the more he cryed
The faster shette they the dores all
Tho wyst he wel, he had him selfe begyled
And went his way, no lenger durste he call

The people cried & rombled vp and doun
That with his eeres he herde how they sayd
Where is this false tyraunt, this Neroun
For feare ful nere out of his wytte he brayde
And to his goddes, right pitously he prayde
For socoure, but it might not betyde
For drede of this, him thought that he deyde
And ran into a gardeyn, him to hyde.

And in this gardaine, founde he chorles twey
Spetting by a fyre great and reed
And to the chorles two he gan to prey
To slee him, and to gryde of his heed
That to his body, whan he were deed
Were no dispyte done, for his diffame
Him selfe he slough, he couthe no better reed
Of whiche fortune lough and had game.

Holofernes.

Was neuer captayne vnder a kyng
That reignes mo, put in subiectioun
Ne stronger was in felde, of all thyng
As in his time, ne greater of renoun
Ne more pompous in hygh presumpcioun
Than Holoferne, whiche fortune ay kyste
And so lycorously lad him vp and doun
Tyll that he deed was er that he wyste.

Not only that this worlde had of him awe
For lesyng of richesse and lyberte
But he made euery man reneye his lawe
Nabugodonosor was lorde, sayd he
None other god shuld honoured be
Ayenst his hest, there dare no wight trespace
Saue in Bethulia, a stronge cyte
Where Eliachym was preest of that place

But take kepe of the dethe of Holopherne
Amyd his host, he dronke lay all nyght
Within his tent, large as is a berne
And yet for al his pompe, & al his might
Judith, a woman, as he lay vpright
Slepyng, his heed of smote, and fro his tente
Ful preuely she stale, from euery wight
And with his heed, vnto her town she wente.

Antiochus.

What nedeth it of kynge Antiochus
To tel his hygh and royall maniere
His great pryde, hys werke venemus
For suche an other man nas neuer as he
Redeth what that he was in Machabe
And redeth the proude wordes that he sayde
And why he fyl from his prosperyte
And in an hyll how wrecchedly he deyde.

Fortune him had enhaunsed so in pryde
That verily he wende he might attayne
Vnto the sterres, vpon euery syde
And in a balaunce, to wey eche mountayne
And al the floodes of the see restrayne
And goddes people had he moste in hate
Hem wold he slee, in turment and in payne
Wenyng that god ne myght hys pride abate.

¶ And for that Nychanore and Tymothe
By iewes were venquished mygtyly
Unto the Jewes such an hate had he
That he had greythe his chare full hastily
And swore and sayde, ful dispytously
Unto Jherusalem he wolde ryght one
To wreke his vengeaunce ful cruelly
But of his purpose was he let ful sone.

¶ God for his manace him sote smote
With inuysible wounde, ayr incurable
That in his guttes carfe so and bote
That his paynes were importable
And certainly the wreche was resonable
For many a mannes guttes dyd he payne
But from his purpose, cursed & dampnable
For al his smerte, he nolde him not restrayne.

But bade anon, aparayle his hoste
And sodeynly, or he ware of his woste
God daunted all his pride, & al his boste
For he so sore fel out of his chare
That al his lymmes and his herte to tare
So that he nyghte gone nor ryde
But as a chaytif wan about him hare
Al forbrused bothe backe and syde.

¶ The wreche of god him smote so cruelly
That in his body wicked wormes crepte
And therwith al he stanke so horribly
That none of all the men, that him kepte
Whether that he woke or slepte
Ne myght nat of him the stenche endure
And in his malayse he many a worme wepte
And lothsome god, lothe of every creature

¶ To al his hoste, and to him self also
Ful lothsom was the stenche of his carayne
No man myght him bere to ne fro
And in his stynke, & in his horrible payne
He stered ful wretchedly on a mountayne
Thus hath this robbour, and this homycide
That many a man made to wepe and playne
Such guerdon, as belongeth to pryde.

¶ Alexander.

The storie of Alexander is so comune
That every wight, that hath discreccioun
Hath herde somwhat or al, of his fortune
This wyde worlde, as in conclusioun
He wan by strength, and for his renoun
They were glad for peace unto him sende
The pryde of man, and boste he layde aboun
Where so he came, unto the worldes ende.

¶ Comparison might yet neuer be maked
Betwixt him, and an other conquerour
For al this world, for drede of his hath quaked
He was of knyghthod, & of fredome flour
Fortune him made the herte of high honour
Save wyne & women, nothing might aswage
His high entente in armes and labour
So was he ful of lovyng corage.

What prince were it to his, though I rowtede
Of Darius, & of a hundred thousande mo
Of princes, erles, and knyghtes bolde
Which he conquered, and brought to wo
I say as forth as a man may ryde or go
The world was his, what should I more deuise
For though I wrote and rolde you ever mo
Of his knyghthode, it might not suffise

Twelue yere he regned, as we fynde
Philippes sonne of Macedoyne he was
That first was kynge of Grece, that couthe
Of noble grete Alexander alas
That ever sholde fortune passe
Enpoysoned of thy folke thou were
Thy grete fortune hath envyed in no wise
And yet for the ne kepte he nought a tare

¶ Who shall yeve myn teres to conplayne
The dethe of gentylesse, and of franchise
That al the worlde wepte hit wyth besynesse
And yet him thought it nought inough
Thus was his corage of his enpoysoned
Alas, who shall me helpe to endyte
False fortune, and poyson to despyte
The mordre, of all this wyde I write.

¶ Julius Cesar.

Of Julius Cesar, syth his begynnyng
From humble bed to dignite imperial
Which hym conquered, and made hym lorde
Of londes, & realmes, & many a feste royal
Of his strength of body, or of his corage
Of his wysedome, and of his grete labour
Of his hye estate, and of his parage
Of his victories, in batayle and stoure
Of his glorye, and of his renoun
Of his moeble, and of his excellence
Of his hye reason, and of his prudence
Of his myght, and of his magnyficence
May every man rede, that wyl of him here
Fro his tyme that he gan fyrst appere
To the time that he was slayne
Ther is no more to say, as ye shal here
But of his fal, and of his deth compleyne.

¶ Of myghty Cesar, that in Thessaly
Azenst Pompei, father than in lawe
That of the Orient had the chyvalry
As fers as that the day begynneth to dawe
The thrugh knyghthode hath take a lawe

Same fewe folke, þ with Pompeius fledde
Through which þ purrest al þ Orient in awe
Thanke fortune, that so well the spedde.

But now a lytell whyle I will bewayle
This Pompei, this noble gouernour
Of Rome, which that fledde at this batayle
I saw one of his men, a false traytour
His hed of smote, to winne him fauour
Of Iulius, and to him the hed brought
Was Pompei, of the Orient conquerour
That fortune vnto suche a fyne hir wrought

To Rome again repayreth Iulius
With his triumphe laureate ful hye
But in a tyme y^e tyrus Callus
That nere had of his hye estate enuye
Ful priuely had made conspiracye
Fro this Iulius in subtil wyse
In the capitol, in which he shulde dye
To be slayne, as I shall you deuyse

This Iulius bere the capitol herte
Vpon a day, as he was wont to gone
And in the capitol anon him serte
This false traytour, and his other sone
And stode him with bodekyns anone
And many a wounde, & thus they let him lye
But neuer grutched he at no dethes but one
Of his at alle, but if his story lye

The manly mood that Iulius of herte
And his noble corage in bataylle
Whan he his dethe sawe he wolde not sterte
But rente ouer his clothes alle
For no man shulde se his payne
And as he lay vp Dreming on a traunce
And wolde perdy that dye shulde he
Of knyghs yet had he remembraunce.

Lucan to the this story I recommende
And to Sueton, and Valery also
That of this story writen word & ende
How that these conquerours two
Fortune was first a frende, & fyrste a foe
No man trust vpon her fauour longe
But haue her in awayte for euermo
Ensample take on all the conquerours stronge

Crefus.

The riche Crefus, tyrannous kynge of Lyde
Of whiche Crefus, Cirus fyre him dradde
Yet was he caught amyddes al his pryde
And to be brente, men to the fyre him ladde
But such a raine doun fro þ firmament hadde
That quenyt the fire, & made him to scape
But to bewaye yet no grace he hadde
Tyl fortune on the galowes made him gape

Whan he escaped was, he could not flyne
For to begyn a newe warre agayne
He wende wel, for that fortune him sente
Such happe, þ he escaped through the rayne
That of his foes he myght not be slayne
And eke a fantum vpon a nyght he mette
Of which he was so proude, & eke so fayne
That in vengeaunce he all his herte sette

Vpon a tree he was as him thought
Where Iupiter him wesshe, both backe & syde
And phebus eke a fayre to weste him brought
To dry him both, & therwith wexe his pryde
And to his doughter that hight him bryde
Which þ he knewe in his sentence bad him be
He had her tell what it signified
And he his answere right thus hyd & couple

The tree vnto the galous is to mene
And Iupiter betokeneth shoure and rayne
And phebus, that his doughter is to mene
Betokeneth the holy beames fayre & playne
Now shall nought be farther fro the payne
Than that the wedde, & forme shall be thus
Thus he be wrapt with fire pyne & bale
His doughter, that called was Pharne

And hanged was Crefus the proude kynge
But ryght as rayne myght him not auayle
Right so ne myght no other maner thynges
Be cause fro purgatorye me to bayle
But for that fortune alway wolde assayle
Hir wonted vyces, & shewe her subtilte
And vp me caste, & vnwarly me trayle
For wele nor wo knowe I neuer be
And couer her brighte face with a cloude.

Perse of Spayne.

O noble, o worthy Perse, glory of Spayne
O doun fortune, bide to byght so mayne
Al ought men thy prowes & thy complayne
Out of the lande, thy brother made the dye
And after at a siege by subtilte
Thou were betrayed, & ladde vnto thy tene
Al were as he with his owne honde slue the
Sauf only in thy vengeaunce and in thy tene

The fylde of stowe, in the glade of blacke thorn
Caught w^t the ymmrod, coloured as the glede

He brewe this cursydnesse, & all this synne
The wycked nesse was werker of this dede
Not Charles, Oliuer, that toke aye hede
Of trouthe and honoure, but of Armorike
Genilion Oliuer, corrupt for mede
Brought this worthy kyng in suche a brike.

¶ Petro kinge of Cypre.

O worthy Petro, kyng of Cypre also
That Alisandrie wan by highe maistry
Full many an hethen wroughtest thou wo
Of which thine owne lieges had enuy
And for no thyng, but for thy chyualry
They in thy bed han slayn the by the morowe
Thus can fortune her whele gouerne & gye
And out of ioye bring men to sorowe.

¶ Barnabo vicoũte.

Of Milan great Barnabo vicounte
God of delyte, & scourge of Lũbardye
Why shulde I not thin infortune accounte
Sens in astate thou clombest were so hye
Thy brothers sõne, that was thy double alye
For he thy nevewe was, and sonne in lawe
Maulan his put on made the to dye
But why ne how wost I, þ thou were slawe.

¶ Hugelyne of Pyse.

Of the erle Hugelyne of Pyse the lãgoure
There may no tonge tel for pyte
But lytel out of Pyse floure a toure
In whiche toure in prison put was he
And with him ben his lytel childzen thre
The eldest scarsly fyue yere of age
Alas fortune, it was a great cruelte
Suche byrdes for to put in suche a cage.

¶ Dampned was he to dye in that prison
For Roger, whiche that bysshop was of Pise
Had on him made a false suggestyon
Through which þ people gan vpon him ryse
And put him in prison, in suche a wise
As ye haue herde, and meate & drynke he had
So smal, that vnneth it may suffyse
And therwithall it was ful poze and bad

¶ And on a day befel, that in that houre
Whã that his meate wont was to be brouzt
The geylour shette the dozes of the toure
He herde it wel, but he spake right nought
And in his hert anon there fyll a thought
That they for hunger wold do him dyen
Alas (qõ he) alas that I was wrought
Therwith the teeres fyll fro his eyen.

¶ His yong sonne, that thre yere was of age
Unto him said, father father why do ye wepe
Whan wyl the geylour bring our potage
Is there no morsel bzede that ye do kepe
I am so hungry, that I may not slepe
Now wold god that I might slepe euer
Than shuld not hunger in my wombe crepe
There nys nothyng but bzede þ me wer leuer

¶ Thus day by day, this childe began to crye
Tyl in his fathers arme adowne it laye
And sayd, farwell father I mote dye
And kyste his father, and deyde the same day
And whan the woful father dyd it sey
For wo, his armes two he gan to byte
And said alas, fortune and welaway
Thy false whele, my wo al may it wyte.

¶ His children wend, that it for hunger was
That he his armes gnewe, and not for wo
And said: father, do not so (alas)
But rather eate the flesche vpon vs two
Our flesche þ yaue vs, take our flesche vs fro
And eate ynough, right thus they to him said
And after that within a day or two
They laid hem in his lappe adoun, & deyde

Thus ended is this myghty erle of Pise
Him selfe dispeyred eke, for hunger darfe
From high estate fortune away him carfe
Of this Tragedy, it ought ynough suffise
Who so wol here it in a longer wyse
Redeth the great porte of Itayle
That hyght Dante, for he can it all deuyse
Fro poynt to point, not a worde wol he faile.

¶ Here endeth the Monkes tale.

¶ Here stynteth the knyght the Monke of his tale, and here foloweth the prologue of the Nonnes preest.

HO (qõ the knyght) good sir no more of this
That ye haue sayd, is right ynough ywys
And mokel more, for lytel honeste
Is right ynough to moche folke, I gesse
I saye for me, it is a great disease

Where

Where as men haue be in welth and ease
To here of her sodayne fal, alas
And the contrary is ioye and solas
As when a man hath ben in poore estate
And clymbeth vp, and wexeth fortunate
And there abydeth in prosperite
Suche thinges is gladsome, as thinketh me
And of suche thing were good for to tell.
¶ Ye (qd our hoste) by saynt Poules bel
Ye say right soth, this monke clapperth loude
He spake, how fortune couered with a cloude
I wote not what, and also of a Tragedy
Right nowe ye herde, and perdy no remedy
It is for to bewayle, ne complayne
That that is done, and als it is a payne
As ye haue sayde, to here of heuyneesse
Sir monke no more of this, so god you blesse
Your tale anoyeth al this company
Suche talkyng is not worth a butterfly
For therin is there no disport ne game
Therfore sir monke, dan Piers by your name
I pray you hertely, tel vs somwhat elles
For sykerly, nere clinkyng of your belles
That on your bridel honge, on euery syde
By therof kyng, that for vs all dyde
I shulde er this han fall downe for slepe
Although the slough had ben neuer so depe
Than had your tale al be tolde in vayne
For certaynly, as that these clerkes sayne
Where as a man may haue none audience
Nought helpeth it to tel his sentence
And wel I wote, the substaunce is mine
If any thyng, shal wel reported be
Sir, say somwhat of huntyng I you pray
Nay qd this mōke I haue no lust to play
Nowe let an other tel, as I haue tolde.
¶ Thā spake our hoste with rude speche & bolde
And sayed vnto the nonnes preest anon
Come nere ꝙ preest, come hither thou sir John
Tel vs such a thing, as may our hertes glade
Be blythe, though thou ryde vpon a lade
What though thy horse be bothe foule & lene
If he wol serue the, recke not a bene
Loke that thy herte be mery euer mo
¶ Yes sir (qd he) yes host, so mote I go
But I be mery, I wis I wol be blamed
And right anon, his tale he hath atamed
And thus he sayde, vnto vs euerychon
This swete preest, this goodly man sir John

¶ Here endeth the prologue of the Nonnes preest, and here followeth his tale.

A Poore wedowe, somdele stepe in age
Was whylom dwelling in a poore cotage
Bysyde a grove, stonding in a dale
This wydowe, of which I tel you my tale
Sens the day that she was laste a wyfe
In patience, ledde a ful simple lyfe
For lyttel was her catell and her rent
By husbondrye, of suche as god her sent
She fonde her self, & eke her doughters two
Thre large sowes had she, and no mo
Thre kyne, & eke a shepe that hight Malle
Ful sooty was her bowre, and eke her halle
In whiche she eete many a sclender male
Of poynant sauce, ne knewe she neuer a dale
Of daynty morsell passed thrugh her throte
Her diet was accordaunt to her cote
Repleccion ne made her neuer syke
A temperate diet was her physyke
And exercise, and hertes suffisaunce
The gout let her nothyng for to daunce
Ne apoplexie shente nat her heed
No wyne dranke she, whyte ne reed
Her boorde was most serued with white & blacke
Milke & broun breed, in which she fonde no lacke
Seynde bakon, & somtyme an ey or tweye
For she was as it were a maner deye.
¶ A yerde she had, enclosed al aboute
With stickes, and drie dyched withoute
In whiche she had a cocke hight Chauntecleer
In al the lande, of crowing nas his peer
His voyce was merier than the merie orgon
On masse dayes, that in the churches gon
Wel sykerer was his crowing in his logge
Than is a clocke, or an abbey orologe
By nature he knewe ech ascencion
Of the equinoctial in the toun
For when degrees fyfteene were ascended
Than crew he, that it might nat be amended
His combe was redder than the fyne coral
And batteled, as it had be a castel wall
His bil was blacke, as any geet it shone
Lyke asure were his legges and his tone
His nayles whyter than the lylye flour
And lyke the burned golde was his colour,
¶ This gentil cocke, had in gouernaunce
Seuen hennes, to doe his pleasaunce
Which were his sustres, and his paramours
And wonder lyke to hym, as of colours
Of whiche the fayrest hewed on the throte

Was called fayre damosell Pertelote
Hir fethered her a hundred tymes a day
And she him pleseth,al that euer she may
Curteys she was,discrete,and debonayre
And compenable,and bare her selfe so fayre
Sens the tyme that she was seuenyght olde
That truely she,she hath the hert in holde
Of Chaunteclere,lokyng in eury lyth
Ye loueth her so,that wel was him therwith
But suche a ioye it was to here hem synge
Whan the brighte sonne gan to springe
In swete acorde,my lefe is fere in londe
For that tyme,as I haue vnderstonde
Beestes and briddes couldе speke and synge
And it so fell,that in the dawenynge
As Chaunteclere,among his wyues all
Sat on his perche,that was in the hall
And nexte him sat his fayre Pertelote
This Chaunteclere gan to grone in his throte
As a man in his dreme is drenched sore
And whan ye Pertelot thus herde him rore
She was agast,and sayd herte dere
What eyleth you to grone in this manere
Ye be a very sleper,fye for shame.
And he answered thus,by god madame
I pray you,that ye take it not in greue
By god I mette,I was in suche mischefe
Right now,that yet myn hert is sore afryght
Now god quod he my sweuen rede aryght
And kepe my body out of fowle prisoun
Me mette,that I romed vp and doun
Within our yerde,where I sawe a beest
Was like an hound,and wolde haue made areest
Vpon my body,and wold haue had me deed
His colour was betwyxte yelow and reed
And typped was his tayle,and both his eeres
With black,vnlike the remenant of his heeres
His snoute smal,with glowynge eyen tweye
Yet for his loke,almost for feare I deye
This causeth me my grouyng doutelesse.
Auay quod she fye for shame hertelesse
Alas quod she for by god aboue
Nowe haue ye lost my hert,and al my loue
I can not loue a coward by my faythe
For certes,what so any woman sayth
We al desyre,if that it myght be
To haue husbondes,hardy,wyse,and free
And secrete,and no nygarde,ne no fole
Ne him that is agast of eury tole
Ne none auauntour,by that god aboue
How darst ye say for shame,vnto your loue
That any swcuen might make you a ferde
Haue ye no mannes hert,and haue a berde
Alas,and con ye be a ferde of swcuenis
Nothing but vanite god wotte in swcuenis
Swcuens ben engendred of repleccions
And of fume,and of complecciones
When humours beeth habundant in a wight
certes this dreme,which ye haue met to night
I tel you trouthe,ye may trust me
Cometh of superfluite,and reed colour parde
Whiche cause folke to drede in her dremes
Of arowes,and of fire with reed lemes
Of reed beestes,that wol hem byte
Of contek,and of wapes great and lyte
Right as the humour of melancolye
Causeth many a man in slepe to crye
For fere of great bulles,and beres blake
Or els that blacke devels wol hem take
Of other humours couldе I tell also
That werke a men in slepe muche wo
But I wol passe,as lightly as I can.
Lo Caton,which that was so wise a man
Sayd he not thus,do no force of dremes
Nowe sir qd she when we flie fro ye bemes
For goddes loue, as taketh some laxatiue
Vp peryl of my soule,and of my life
I counsayle you the beste, I wol not lye
That bothe of colour,and of melancolye
Ye purge you,and for ye shul not tarye
Though in this towne, be none apotecarye
I shal my selfe two herbes techе you
That shall be for your heale,and for your prow
And in our yerde, tho herbes shal I fynde
The whiche I haue of her propertе by kynde
To purge you bynethe,and eke aboue
Forget not this,for goddes owne loue
Ye be right colerike of complection
Where the sonne is in his ascencion
Ne fynde you not replete of humours hote
For if ye do, I dare wel lay a grote
That ye shal haue a feuer tertiane
Or els an ague,that may be your bane
A day or two,ye shal haue digestiues
Of wormes,or ye take your laxatiues
Of laurel,centorie,and of fenemere
Or els of elder berries,that growe there
Of catapuce,or of gayteres beries
Of herbe yue,growing in our yerde ye merry is
Plucke hem vp as they growe,and eate hem in
Be merry husbonde,for your father kin
Dredeth no dreme, I can say no more
Madame qd he gramercy of your lore
But natheless,as touching dan Caton
That of wisdome hath so great renoun
Though he bade no dremes for to drede

By god, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctorite
Than euer Caton was, so mote I the
That al the reuers sayth of his sentence
And haue wel founde by experience
That dremes ben significacions
As wel of ioye, as of tribulacions
That folke endure, in this life present
Ther nedeth to make of this none argument
The very preue hath it indede
One of the greatest auctours that men rede
Sayth thus, ꝑ whilom two felowes went
On pilgrimage, in ful good entent
And happed so, they come into a toun
Where as there was suche congregacion
Of people, and eke of herbergage
That redy ne founde, as muche as a cotage
In which they bothe might yloged be
Wherfore they moste of necessyte
As for that nyght, departe company
And eche of hem gothe to hys hostelry
And toke his lodgyng, as it wolde fall
That one of hem, was lodged in a stall
Farre in a yerde, with oxen of the plough
That other man was lodged wel ynough
As was his auenture, or his fortune
That vs gouerneth all, as in comune
And so bifel, longe or it were day
This man mette in his bedde, there as he lay
How that his felowe gan vpon him call
And sayd alas, for in an ores stall
This nyght shal I be murdered, there I lye
Nowe helpe me dere brother or I dye
In al haste, come to me, he sayd
This man out of hys slepe for feare abrayd
But whan he was waked of hys slepe
He turned him, and toke of this no kepe
Him thought his dreme was but a vanite
Thus twyse in hys slepe dremed he
And at the thirde tyme, yet hys felawe
Cam as him thought, and sayd I nowe am slawe
Beholde my bloudy woundes, depe and wyde
Arise vp early, in the morowe tyde
And at the west gate of the toun, quod he
A carte ful of donge, there shalt thou se
In which my body is hyde ful priuely
Do thou that carte arrest boldely
My golde caused my deth, soth to sayne
And told him euery point how he was slayne
With a ful petous face, pale of hewe
And trust wel his dreme he founde right trewe
For on the morowe, as sone as it was day
To his felowes inne, he toke the way
And when that he came to the ores stall
After his felowe, he began to call.
The hostelere answerde hym anon
And sayd, sir your felowe is gon
As sone as it was day, he went out of ꝑ toun
This man gan fal in suspecion
Remembring of his dremes that he mette
And forth he gothe, no longer would he lette
Vnto the west gate of the toune, and fonde
A donge carte, as it were to donge londe
That was arayed in the same wyse
As ye haue herde the dede man deuise
And with hardy herte, he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and iustice of this felonye
My felowe murdred is this same nyght
And in this carte he lyeth, gapyng vpright
I crye out on the ministers quod he
That shulde kepe and rule this cyte
Harowe alas, here lyeth my felowe slayne
What sholde I more of this tale fayne
The people out start, and rafte ꝑ carte to grounde
And in the middel of the donge they founde
The dede man, that murdred was al newe.
O blisful god, that arte so good and trewe
Lo, howe thou bewrayest murdre alway
Murdre wol out, that se we day by day
Murdre is so wlatsome and abhominable
To god, that so iuste is and reasonable
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled to be
Though it abyde a yere, two or three
Murdre wol out, this is my conclusion
And right anon, the ministers of the toun
Haue hent the carter, and fast him pyned
And eke the hostelere so fast engyned
That they beknewe her wikkednesse anone
And were honged by the necke bone
Here may ye se that dremes ben to drede.
And certes, in the same lete I rede
Right in the next chapiter after this
I gabbe not, so haue I ioye and blis
Two men wold haue passed ouer the se
For certayne causes, into a ferre countre
If the wynde ne had be contrarye
That made hem in a cite for to tarye
That stode ful merry vpon an hauen syde
But on a day, ageyn the euen tyde
The wynde gan chaunge, and blewe as hem lest
Ioly and glad, they went to rest
And cast hem ful erly for to saile
But herken, to one man fel a great mervayle
That one of hem, in slepyng as he lay
He mette a wonder dreme, agayn the day
Him thought a man stode by his beddes syde

And

And him cõmaunded, that he shulde abyde
And sayd hym thus, if thou to morow wende
Thou shalt be dreint, my tale is at an ende.
¶ He woke, and tolde his felowe what he mette
And prayd him his voyage for to lette
As for that day, he prayd hym for to abyde
His felowe, that lay by his beddes syde
Gan for to laugh, and scorned him ful faste
No dreme, quod he may so my herte agaste
That I wol let for to do my thynges
I set not a strawe for thy dremynges
For swevens ben but vanytes and japes
Men dreme al day of owles and of apes
And eke of many a maze ther with all
And dremen of thing that neuer was, ne shall
But sythe I se that thou wolt here abyde
And thus wilfully thy tyme abyde
God wote it rueth me, and have good day
And thus he rode his way, and went his way
But er he had half his course yeuied
I not why, ne what myschaunce it ayled
But certeinly the Gyptes be come to trust
And Kyng and men, enbet the water wide
In frighte of other Gyptes be syde
That with hem fareth at the same tyde
And therfor fayre Pertelote so dere
By such ensamples olde, may I thou lere
That no man shulde be to recheles
Of dremes, for I say the bewrelle
That many a dreme full sore is for to drede
I, in the life of lorde Kenelme ye rede
That was Kenulphus sonne, the noble kyng
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thyng
A lyte er he was murthred on a day
His mother in his bedde he lay
His norice hym expounded it ryght by ordre
Bis shulde, and bidde him kepe him wele
For treason, but he was but seuen yere olde
And therfor lytel tale he ther of tolde
Of auy dreme, so holy was his herte
By god, I had rather than my shorte
That ye had herde his legende, as have I
Dame Pertelote, I say to you trewly
Macrobius, that writeth the auision
In Affrike, of the worthy Cipion
Affirmeth dremes, and saythe that they been
Warning of thinges, that we after seen
And forthermore I pray you loketh wel
In the olde Testament, of Daniel
Yf he held dremes for vanyte
Rede eke of Joseph, and there shal ye se
Wonders ben somtyme, but I say nat all
Warning of thinges, that after shall fall.
¶ Lo of Egipte the kynge, that hight Pharao
His baker, and his butteler also
Wheder they felte none effecte in dremes,
Who so wol seke actes of sondrye remes
May rede of dremes a wonder thyng
¶ Lo Cresus which was of Lyde kyng
Mette he not that he, sate vpon a tre
Which signified he shulde honged be
¶ Lo Idiomeda, that was Hectors wyfe
That day that Hector shoulde lese his lyfe
She dremed in the same nyght before
How the lyfe of Hector shulde be lore
Yf that day he went into batayle
She warned him, but it might not auayle
He went for to fight neuer the lesse
But he was slayne anone of Achilles
But that tale is to long to tell
And eke it is nigh day I may not dwell
Shortly I say, as for conclusion
That I shall have of this auision
Adversite: and I say furthermore
That I ne tel of laxatyues no store
For they ben venemous, I wote it wele
I hem defye, I love hem neuer a dele
But let vs speke of myrthe, and stynte al this
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis
Of one thyng god hath me sent large grace
For when I se the beaute of your face
Ye ben so scarlet reed about your eyen
It maketh al my drede for to dyen
For al so syker as In principio
Mulier est hominis confusio.
¶ Madame the sentence of this latyn is
Woman is mannes ioye and his blis
For when I fele a nyghte your soft syde
Al be it that I may not on you ryde
For that our perche is made so narowe alas
I am so ful of ioye and of solas
That I defye both sweuen and dreme
And with the wolde he lepe down fro the beme
For it was day, and eke the bernes all
And with a chuche, he gan them for to call
For he had founde a corne lay in the yarde
Real he was, and he no more a fraide
He flogged Pertelote twenty tyme
And trad her eke as ofte, er it was prime
He loketh as it were a grymme lyon
And on his toes he romed vp and down
Him deyned not to set his fote to the ground
He chucked, when he had a corne yfounde
And to him ranne his wyues all
As royall as a prince in his hall
Leaue I this chaunteclere, in his pasture

And after wol I tel of his aduenture.
Whan ꝑ moneth in whiche ꝑ worlde began
That hight Marche, ꝑ god first made man
Was complete, and passed were also
Syth Marche began, twenty dayes & two
Befyll that Chauntecleer, in al hys pryde
His seuen wyues walking hym beside
Caste vp his eyen to the bright sonne
That in the signe of Taurus was ronne
Fourty degrees & one, and somwhat more
He knewe by kynde, and by none other lore
That it was prime, & crew wyth blisful steuen
The sonne he sayde is clombe vp to heuen
Fourty degrees & one, & somwhat more ouer
Madame Pertelot, my worldes blysse
Herken howe thys blisful birdes synge
And se the freshe flowres howe they sprynge
Ful is myn hert of reuel, and solas
But lokeryght now vnto my fadres aas
Syn that the latter ende of loue is wo
God wote, my dreem wol soone ago
And if a clerke couthe faire endyte
He in a cronycle might saufly wryte
It for a storye notable and trewe
Now herken quod he herken to me
Thus dreyt is all to trewe I vnderstake
Amyd the yerde vpon a cole drake
That hyghte Colfox ful great reuerence
Hath had I turne aweye to my prouence.
That fayre ful of ioye and solace
That with the grete had vsurped vers this
Thre dayes ago vpon a foure talle
The same nyght, thurgh the hedge braide
Into the yerde, there Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont and eke his wyues to repayre
And in a bedde of wortes stil he lay
Tyl it was passed vnderen of the day
Saufly his tyme, on Chauntecleere to fall
As gladly done these homicides all
That in a watte lye to murdre men
O false murdrer, lurkyng in thy den
O newe Iacob, and newe Iudas vyce
Ful of dissimulacion, O greke Synon
That broughtest Troy vtterly to sorowe
O Chauntecleer, acursed be the morowe
That thou in thy yerde flewe from ꝑ bemes
Thou were ful well warned by thy dremes
That the day was perylous to the
But what ꝑ god afore wote, must nedes be
After the opinion of certayne clerkes
Emongst vs, that any clerke is
That in scole is great altercacion
In thys matter, and great disputacion
And hath ben, of an hundred thousande men
But I ne can nat boulte it to the bren
As can the holy doctour saynt Austyn
Or Boece, or the bysshop Bradwardyn
Whether that gods worthy forewetyng
Streyneth me nedely to do a thyng
Nedely clepe I symple necessyte
Or if the free chois be graunted me
To do the same thyng or do it nought
Though god forewote it, er it was wrought
Or if his wetyng streyneth neuer a dele
But by necessite condicionele
I wol not take to done of suche matere
My tale is of a cocke, as ye shal here
That took his counsayle of his wife in sorowe
To walke in the yerde vpon the morowe
That he had met the dreme, as I you tolde
Wommens counsayles ben ofte ful colde
Wommans counsayle broughte vs first to wo
And made Adame fro paradyse to go
There as he was ful mery, and wel at ease
But for I not, to whom I might displease
If I counsayle of wymmen wolde blame
Passe ouer, I sayde it in my game
Rede auctors, where they trete of such matere
And what they sayn of wommen, ye may here
These ben the cokes wordes, and not myne
I can noght good no harme ne gyle
Now sire, and eft sire, so befalle yow myrthe
Then your preyse, and al your folkes by
I holde me payed wel inough therby
Ye shulde wel thanke god aboue alle thyng
Me rather lacke, and eke my doughtren tweyne
Then al the welthe of Kenelmes syre
For if I wolde sey now sothe, sire
Ye haue as mery a dwelling
As has eyther duke or erle, and bet
For ther as we haue many a large toure
But we haue but a cote, and yet therin
Ye shal not fynde vilanye ne synne
Now sire of wymmens counsayles sythen ye
Haue me forbode, and blamed the for to be
Forgyue me yet, and that I you praye
But sire ye haue a full good wyf I saye
And trewely I say as me thynketh
That though she hadde al that her herte thynketh
Ye, and more, in the name of god
She nere the more vnbuxom of her mod
Ne lasse wel loued in no maner age
Ful many a mery worde may men fynde
Betwene a man and his wyf, or betyme
Of which for reuerence I am dombe
Now sire, why chyde ye my wyf, why wol ye done
Ye se she vttreth al her pryuete
Thinke ye by that to stonden in her grace
Nay thinges that were neuer in her thought
May neuer be sayde to the harme ne nought
Ful many a man I wene this wyl say
Now sire, I hope I haue wel quyt you tho
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But touchyng that my dreme me warned hye
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Where as I sawe my daye rolle and trace
As proude as euer is any pecocke in place
That coloures hath of many a dyuers hewe
And pleyed with his wyues al a rewe
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Yet of his look for feare almost I deyne
This caused me my gronyng doutelesse
Ne dredfulnesse is not profytable, I gesse
Ful sone I sighed, whan he spake to me
I wolde haue fled, but he bade me abyde
And sayde me thus, as ye shul here anone
Cease cowarde, and thou shalt haue anone
Thus of his mouth he made a large gape
And in the gronyng I awoke and gape
Now sire, now wol ye fynde some leyser
Iwis quod I, but god yeue it the vnmesure
What quod my wyf, ye sleper lothly beest
Thou dreyest for drede, beshrewe thy hert
Now quod she I holde a myle an ayre
A straw for al your dreme, I rede vs repayre
And forth we go, a myle this is wel sayde
By god, quod she I holde the but a mayde
Thy dreme I shal now expowne, herke me
Now sire, ye haue many a iakes of tre
And for ye be a riche man, and a kyng
I holde your dreme signifyeth nothyng
For dremes ben vnto no purpose drawe
To fantasyes and folke that ben ful awe
Now sire, if that ye to your dreme take hede
And most vpon your dreme I vnderstande
Somwhat touchyng your persone, or lande
Or elles touchyng me, but I holde blyue
That the effect is flat not worth a myue
For ful often in many a mannes wene
Ther shul dremes ben contrarye to sene
Now sire, ther ben two tytelers in this toune
Of which that one is of astronomye
That is to mene, he knoweth the reuolucions
Of the mones mansions, and the reuolucions
Of other planetes, and fixe, and of the sonne
And knoweth also the reason of wynne
Of reyne, and of the chaunge of tymes
As doth the lady of the colde clymes
Of Cartage, and of other regions all
And tokneth wel by lyklynesse of the fall
Of redde, or of the skye so bryght of hewe
Of the byrdes that they crye and pewe
And of the foules that they haue mete
That in the yerde they renne and pycke and plete
Now sire, a fox anone as he hath eten
Anone he wol to water, and his face wete
Now by that reason sire, me semeth nought
Your wyues chydyng that I haue you wrought
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For any wyse man calleth it but drye
Now sire, as touchyng other thyng of me
Me reckeneth nought of dremes by my fe
Now let vs speke of mirthe, and stynte al this
Now faire dame Pertelot, and so it is
Grant mercy of your counsayle, and your chere
But sire, be mery, and let passe al this yere
But of my dreme, how that I mette heere
Ful many a day is passed now syth yere
Wherof al be my wyf ful euel apayde
Yet shal she not make me chaunge a blayde
To do your wyl, and do it wel anone
As that the thynketh, and as ye loue me
And that ye be no more agast for me
And se ye wel that I am not agast
Wymmen, the counsayle of her housbondes lest
Ful litel set they eke by auctorite
Now hardy be your herte, and that anone
Ye ben to me as dere as is my lyfe
So that ye fynde some mene me to wyfe
That shal not be repreued for vylanye
Thus shal ye haue of my counsayle plenye
For trewely I am a ful sad man
And wol not lette for no wo ne care
To crowe whan me lyketh, and ye me se
For sothe sayde she, a shame mote it be
To any man that is a knyght
But that he be hardy as is a knyght
Ne let nought all my wymmanly herte
Ye haue the herte, and eke the myght
That ye haue not a man yet in feare
Ye haue the fethers on your backe, and he
Wol rather dye then flee fro you for shame
And al be that men telle blyue or late
That we haue versyes, and eke we haue debate
Ful many a mery worde men fynde
Ye shul not take no counsayle of my mynde
Ne for my wo ne for my desport
Ne shul ye by my wyl ben take in swich disport
For that I am a pore wydowe, and alone
For sothe I wol me not remarye
For wel I wote that folke ben in purpose
That wedowes shul me nothyng apose
Now wol I say my tale, if ye wol here
The Nonnes preest now wol his tale gone
Whan that he had his tale al done
A worthy man was dwellyng by Athenes
Ful of hye honour, and also of richesse
Which that by wyues had fyue and mo
Of which that I haue spoken heretofore
And fel that he vpon a day
Hath ben, of an hundred thousande men
But I ne can nat boulte it to the bren
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For trewely I am a ful sad man
And wol not lette for no wo ne care
To crowe whan me lyketh, and ye me se
For sothe sayde she, a shame mote it be
To any man that is a knyght
But that he be hardy as is a knyght
Ne let nought all my wymmanly herte
Ye haue the herte, and eke the myght
That ye haue not a man yet in feare
Ye haue the fethers on your backe, and he
Wol rather dye then flee fro you for shame
And al be that men telle blyue or late
That we haue versyes, and eke we haue debate
Ful many a mery worde men fynde
Ye shul not take no counsayle of my mynde
Ne for my wo ne for my desport
Ne shul ye by my wyl ben take in swich disport
For that I am a pore wydowe, and alone
For sothe I wol me not remarye
For wel I wote that folke ben in purpose
That wedowes shul me nothyng apose
Now wol I say my tale, if ye wol here
The Nonnes preest now wol his tale gone
Whan that he had his tale al done
A worthy man was dwellyng by Athenes
Ful of hye honour, and also of richesse
Which that by wyues had fyue and mo
Of which that I haue spoken heretofore
And fel that he vpon a day

As any angel hath, that is in heuen
Therwith ye haue of musyke more feling
Than had Boece, or any that can syng
My lorde your father, god his soule bl[e]sse
And eke your mother, of her genteinesse
Haue in my house ben, to my great ease
And certes sir, full fayne wolde I you please.
But for men speken of syngyng, I wol sey
So mote I brouken wel myn eyen twey
Saue you, ne herde I neuer man so synge
As dyd your father in the morwynge
Certes it was of herte, al that he songe
And for to make his voyce more stronge
He wolde so payne hym, þ with both his eyen
He muste wynke, so loude he must cryen
And stonden on his typtoes ther withall
And stretche forth his necke, longe and small
And eke he was of such discrecion
That there was no man in no region
That hym in songe or wisdome might passe
I haue wel redde dan Burnel the asse
Among his verses, how þ there was a cocke
For that a preestes sonne yaue hym a knocke
Upon his legges, while he was yonge & nice
He made him for to lese his benefice
But certeyne there is no comparison
Betwixt the wisdom and discrecion
Of your father, and of hys subtylte
Now singeth sir, for saint charite
Let se, can ye your father counterfete.
¶ This Chaūtecleer his wynges gan to bete
As man that couldē not his treson aspye
So was he ravished with his flaterye
Alas ye lordes, many a false flatterour
Is in your courte, & many a false lesingour
That plese you wel more, by my fayth
Than he that soth fastnesse vnto you sayth
Redeth Ecclesiast of flaterye
Beware ye lordes of her trecherye.
¶ This Chaūtecleer stode hye vpon his toos
Stretchyng his necke, & helde his eyen cloos
And gan to crowe loude for the nones
And dan Russel the foxe start vp at ones
And by the gorget hent Chaūtecleer
And on his backe, towarde þ woode him bere
For yet was there no man that him sued
O destyne, that maiste not be eschued
Alas that Chaunteclere flewe fro the bemes
Alas his wife rought not of dremes
And on a friday fyll al thys mischaunce
O Venus that art goddesse of plesaunce
Sithnes þ thy seruaūt was this chaūtecleer
And in thy seruyce dyd al his powere
More for delyte, thā the worlde to multiply
Why wouldest þ suffre hym on thy day to dye
¶ O Gaufride, dere maister soverayne
That whā þ worthy kyng Richard was slayn
With shot, complaynedest his deth so sore
Why ne had I now thy sentence and thy lore
The friday for to chide, as dyd ye
For on a friday, sothly slayne was he
Thā wold I shew you how þ I could playne
For Chauntecleres drede, & for his payne.
¶ Certes such cry, ne lamentacion
Was neuer of ladyes made, whan that Ilion
Was won, & Pirrus with his brighte swerde
Whan he hent king Priam by the berde
And slough him (as sayth Eneidos)
As made al the hennes in the cloos
Whan they had lost of Chaūtecleer the syght
But soverainly dame Pertelot shrighte
Wel louder than dyd Hasdruballes wife
Whan that her husbonde had lost his lyfe
And that the Romayns had brent Carthage
She was so ful of torment and of rage
That wilfully in to the fyre she sterte
And brent her selfe, with a stedfast herte.
¶ O wofull hennes, right so cryed ye
As whan that Nero brent the cyte
Of Rome, cried the senatours wyves
For that her husbondes shuld lese her lyves
Withouten gylte Nero hath hem slayne
Now wol I turne to my tale agayne.
¶ The sely wydowe, & her doughters two
Herde the hennes crye and make wo
And out at the dore sterte they anon
And sawe the foxe towarde the wodde gon
And bare vpon his backe the cocke away
And cried out harow and well away
Ha the foxe, and after him they ran
And eke with staves, many a nother man
Ran Colle our dogge, Talbot, & eke Garlonde
And Malkyn, with her dystaffe in her honde
Ran cowe & calfe, and eke the very hogges
For they so sore a ferde were of the dogges
And shoutyng of men, and of women eke
They ran so, her hert thought to breke
They yelleden as fendes do in helle
The duckes cried as men wolde hem quelle
The geese for feare flewe ouer the trees
Out of the hyues came the swarme of bees
So hydous was the noyse, a benedicite
Certes Jacke Strawe, ne his meyne
Ne made neuer shoutes half so shrill
Whan that they wold any Flemmyng kyll
As that day was made vpon the foxe

of braſſe they blewe the trompes & of bore
of horne & bone, i which they blew & pouped
And therwith they ſhryked and ſhouted
It ſemed, as though heuen ſhuld fall
Now good men I pray you herken all.
Lo how fortune turneth ſodainly
The hope and the pride of her enemy
This cocke that lay vpon the fores backe
In al his drede, vnto the fore he ſpake
And ſaid, ſir: if I were as ye
Yet ſhuld I ſay, as wyſe god helpe me
Turneth ayen, ye proude churles all
A very peſtilence vpon you fall
Now am I come vnto this woodes ſyde
Vaugre your heed, the cocke ſhal here abyde
I wol him eete in fayth, and that anone
The fore anſwerd, in faith it ſhal be done
And as he ſpake the worde, all ſodainly
This cocke braſt from his mouthe deliuerly
And hight vpon a tree he flewe anon
And whan the fore ſawe that he was gon
Alas qd he o Chaunteclere alas
I haue qd he do to you treſpas
In as moche as I made you aferde
Whā I you hent, & broght out of your yerde
But ſir, I dyd it not in no wicked entent
Come down, & I ſhal tel you what I ment
I ſhal you ſay ſothe, god helpe me ſo.
Nay than qd he I ſhrewe vs both two
And firſt I ſhrewe my ſelf, both blode & bones
If thou begyle me ofter than ones
Thou ſhalte no more with thy flatterye
Do me ſynge with a wynkyng eye
For he that wynketh, whan he ſhulde ſe
Al wilfully, god let him neuer the.
Nay qd ꝑ fore but god yeue him miſchance
That is ſo indiſcrete of gouernaunce
That ſīgeth, whan that he ſhulde haue pees
Lo, ſuche it is for to be recheles
And negligent, and truſte on flatterye
But ye that holde this tale a lye
Of a fore, of a cocke, and of a hen
Taketh the moralyte good men
For ſaynt Poule ſayth, al that writteth is
To our doctrine it is written iwys
Taketh the frute, and let the chaffe be ſtyll
Now good god, if that it be thy wyll
As ſayth my lorde, ſo make vs al good men
And bring vs to thy hygh blyſſe. Amen.

Here endeth the tale of the Nonnes preeſt, and here folowerth the Maneples prologue.

Ir Nonnes prieſte, oure hoſte ſayd anone
Ybleſſed be thy breche & euery ſtone
This was a mery tale of Chaunteclere
But by my trouthe, if thou were ſeculer
Thou wolde ſt be a tredfoule a ryght
For if thou haue corage as thou haſt myght
Thee were nede of hennes, as I weene
Ye more than ſeuen tymes ſeuentene
Se whiche braunes haſt thys gentle prieſt
So great a necke, and ſuche a large breſt
He loketh as a ſparhauke with his eyen
Him nedeth not his colours for to dyen
With braſyl, ne with graine of Portyngale
But ſir, fayre fall you for your tale
And after that, he with ful mery chere
Sayd to a nother man, as ye ſhall here.
Wote ye not where ſtondeth a litell toune
Which that is called Bob vp and doune
Vnder the blee, in Caunterbury way
There gan our hoſte to tape and to play
And ſayd, ſirs: what dunne is in the myre
Is there no man, for prayer ne for hyre
That wol awake our felow behynde
A thefe him might ful lyghtly robbe & bynde
See howe he nappeth, ſe for cockes bones
Howe he wol fal from his horſe at ones
Is that a coke of London, with miſchaunce
To him comforte, he knoweth his pytaunce
For he ſhal tel a tale by my fey
Although it be not worthe a botel of hey
Awake thou coke qd he god yeue the ſorowe
What eyleth the to ſlepe by the morowe
Haſt thou had fleen al nyght, or art ꝑ dronke
Or haſt ꝑ al nyght with ſome queen iwonke
So that thou mayſte not holde vp thyne hed.
This coke ꝑ was ful pale, & nothyng red
Said, ſir hoſt: ſo god my ſoule bleſſe
There is fal on me great heuyneſſe
But I not why, me were leuer to ſlepe
Than the beſt gallon of wyne in chepe.
Wel qd the Maneple if it may do eſe
To the ſir coke, and to no wight diſpleſe
Which that here ride in this compayne
And that our hoſte wyll of his curteſye
I wol as nowe excuſe the of thy tale
For in good faith thy viſage is ful pale
Thyne eyen daſe, forthely as me thynketh
And wel I wote, thy breth ful ſowre ſtynketh
That ſheweth wel thou art not well diſpoſed
Of me certayne thou ſhalt not be gloſed

Se howe he galpeth, lo this dronken wight
As though he wold vs swalowe anon ryght
Holde close thy mouthe, by thy father kyn
The dyuel of hel set his fote therin
Thy cursed brethe wyl infecte vs all
Fye stynking swyne, fye foule mote the befall
Taketh hede sirs of this lusty man
Nowe swete sir, wol ye iuste at the ban
Therto me thinketh ye be well shape
I trowe that ye haue dronken wyne ape
And that is whan men play at strawe.
And wt his speche the coke wexed al wrawe
And on the manciple he gan to nodde fast
For lacke of speche: a down his horse him cast
Where as he lay, tyl that men him vp toke
This was a fatte chcuesaunce of a coke
Alas that he ne had holde him by his ladyll
And er that he ayen were in the sadyll
There was a great chouyng to and fro
To lyfte him vp, and moche care and wo
So vnwieldy was this sely pallid goste
And to the manciple than spake our hoste.
By cause that drinke hath domination
Vpon this man, by my saluation
I trow he shal his tale tell
For were it wyne, or olde moysty ale
That he hath dronke, he speketh so in the nose
And snyueleth fast, and eke hath the pose
He also hath to do more than ynough
To kepe him on his caple out of the slough
And if he fall from his caple eke sone
Then shal we al haue ynough to done
In lyftyng vp his dronken coarse
Tell on thy tale, of him make I no force
But yet Manciple, in faith thou art to nyce
Thus openly to repreue him of his vyce
Another day he will paraunture
Reclayme the, and bring the to lure
I mene he spake wyl of smale thynges
And for to pynche at thy reckenynges
That were not honest, if it came to prefe.
No (qd the manciple) yf were a grete mischefe
So myght he bringe me in to the snare
Yet had I leuer paye for the mare
Which he rideth on, than he should vb me stryue
I will not wrathe him, so mote I thryue
That I spake, I said it but in bourde
And wote ye what, I haue here in my gourde
I draught of wyne, ye of a rype grape
And right anon ye shall se a good iape
This coke shal drinke therof, if I maye
Up payne of my lyfe he will not say naye
And certainly, to tellen as it was
Of this vessell the coke dranke fast, alas
What nedeth it, he dranke ynough before
And whan he had poured in his horne
To the Manciple he toke the gourde agayne
And of the drinke the coke was ful fayne
And thonked him, in suche wise as he coude
Than gan our host to laugh wonder loude
And sayd: I se wel it is necessary
Where yf we gone, good drinke vb vs to cary
For that wil turne rancoure and disese
To accorde & loue, and many a worde to pese
O Bacchus, yblessed be thy holy name
That so canste turne ernest in to game
Worshyp and thonke be to thy deite
Of that matere ye get no more of me.
Tel on thy tale thou Manciple, I the pray
Wel sir (qd he) herkeneth what I say.

Here endeth the Manciples prologue, and here followeth his tale.

Whan Phebus dwelled here in erth adoun
As olde bokes make mencioun
He was the moste lusty bacheler
Of al the world, and eke the best archer
He slough Pheton the serpent, as he lay
Slepyng ayenst the sonne vpon a day
And many a nother noble worthy dede
He wt his bowe wrought, as me mowe rede
Play he could on euery mynstralcye
And synge, that it was a melodye
To here of his clere voyce the soun
Certes the kynge of Thebes, Amphion
That with his songe, walled the cyte
Coude neuer syng halfe so wel as he
Therto he was the semelyst man
That is or was, sythe the world began
What nedeth it his feture to discryue
For in this world nas none so fayre a lyue
He was therwith fulfylled of gentylnesse
Of honoure, and of perfyte worthynesse
This Phebus, yf was flour of bachelerye
As wel in fredome, as in chyualrye
For his disporte, in signe eke of victory
Of Pheton, so as telleth vs the story
Was wont to beare in his honde a bowe
Now had this Phebus in his house a crowe
Within a cage ifostred many a daye

And

And taught it speche, as men teche a laye
Whyte was this crowe, as is a whyte swan
And counterfete the speche of euery man
He coulde, whan he shulde tel a tale
Ther was in al this worlde no nyghtyngale
He could, by an hundred thousande dele
Synge so wonderly mery and wele
Now had this Phebus in his house a wife
Which that he loued more than his lyfe
And nyght and day, did euer his dilygence
Her for to plese, and do her reuerence
Saue only, if I the sothe shal sayne
Jelous he was, and wold haue kept her fayne
For him were lothe, taped for to be
And so is euery wight, in suche degre
But all for nought, for it auayleth nought
A good wife, that is clene of werke and thought
Shulde not be kept in none awayte certayne
And truely the labour is in vayne
To kepe a shrewe, for it wol not be
This holde I for a very nyrete
To spyl labour, for to kepe wyues
Thus writen olde clerkes in her lyues
But now to purpose, as I fyrst began
This worthy Phebus, doth al that he can
To please her, weninge through such plesaunce
And for his manhode, and for his gouernaunce
That no man shulde put him from her grace
But god it wote, there may no man enbrace
As to distrayne a thyng, which that nature
Hath naturally set in a creature
Take any byrde, and put him in cage
And do al thyn entent, and thy corage
To foster it tenderly with meate and drinke
Of al daynties that thou canste bethynke
And kepe it also clenly as thou may
Although the cage of golde be neuer so gay
Yet had this byrd, by twenty thousand folde
Leuer in a forest, that is wyde and colde
Go ete wormes, and suche wretchednesse
For euer this birde wil do his besynesse
To escape out of his cage, whan he maye
His lyberte the birde desyreth aye.
Let take a catte, and foster her with mylke
And tender flesche, and make her couche of sylke
And let her se a mouse go by the wall
Anon she weyueth flesche, and couche, and all
And euery deyntie, that is in that house
Suche appetyte hath she to ete the mouse
Lo here hath lust his dominacion
And appetyte flemeth discrecion.
I the wolfe, hath also a vylanous kynde
The leudest wolfe that the may fynde
Or lest of reputacion, that woll she take
In tyme whan her lust to haue a make
Al these ensamples speke I by these men
That ben vntrue, and no thyng by women
For men haue euer a lycorous appetyte
On lower thyng, to performe her delyte
Than on her wyues, be they neuer so fayre
Ne neuer so trewe, ne so debonayre
Flesche is so newefangel, with mischaunce
That we ne con in no thyng haue plesaunce
That sowneth vnto vertue, any whyle.
¶ This Phebus, whiche thought no gyle
Disceyued was, for al his wytte
For vnder him an other had she
A man of lytel reputacion
Nought worth to Phebus, in comparyson
The more harme is, it happeth ofte so
Of which there cometh moch harme, and wo
And so befell, whan Phebus was absent
His wyfe anon hath for her lemman sent
Her lemman, certes that is a knaueshe speche
Forgeue it me, and that I you beseche.
¶ The wyse Plato sayth, as ye mowe rede
The worde must nedes acorde with the dede
If men shulde tel properly a thyng
The worde must cosyn be to the werkyng
I am a boystouse man, right thus say I
There is but lytel difference truely
Betwyxt a wyfe, that is of hye degre
If of her body dishoneste be
And a poore wenche, other than this
If it so be they werke both amys
But for the gentyl is in estate aboue
She shalbe called his lady and his loue
And for that other is a poore woman
She shalbe called his wenche, or his lemman
And god it wote, myn owne dere brother
Men lay as lowe that one as that other
Right so betwyxt a tyrlelesse tyraunt
And an outlawe, or a thefe erraunt
The same I say, there is no difference
To Alysaunder was tolde this sentence
That for the tyraunt is of greater myght
By force of meyne, to slee downe right
And brenne house and home, and make al playn
Lo therfore is he called a capitayn
And for the outlawe hathe but smal meyne
And may not do so great an harme, as he
Ne brynge a countrey to so great mischefe
Men callen him an outlawe or a thefe.
¶ But for I am a man not ertrucle
I woll not tell of ertres neuer a dele
I woll go to my tale, as I began.

Whan Phebus wife had sent for her lemman
Anon they wrought al their luste volage
This white crowe, that hynge aye in the cage
Behelde their werke, and sayd neuer a worde
And whan home was come Phebus the lorde
This crowe longe, cuckow, cuckow, cuckow
What bird (qd Phebus) what synges thou
Ne were thou not wont so merily to syng
That to my herte it was reioysyng
To here thy voyce, alas, what song is this
By god (qd he) I synge not amys
Phebus (qd he) for al thy worthynesse
For al thy beaute, and thy gentylnesse
For al thy songe, and thy minstralsye
For al thy waytynge, blered is thyn eye
With one of lytel reputacyon
Not worth to the in comparyson
The mountenace of a gnat, so mote I thryue
For on thy bed, thy wife I sawe him swyue
What wol you more (qd the crow anon him told
By sad tokens, and by wordes bold
How that his wyfe had done her lechery
Him to great shame, and to great vyllany
And tolde him eft, he saw it with his eyen
This Phebus gan awaywarde for to pryen
Him thought his woful herte brast a two
His bowe he bent, and set therin a flo
And in his yre he hath his wyfe slayne
This is the effecte, there is no more to sayne
For sorow whereof he brake his minstralsye
Both harpe and lute, getern, and sautrye
And eke he brake his arowes, and his bowe
And after that, thus spake he to the crowe.
Traytour (qd he) with tonge of scorpion
Thou hast me brought to my confussyon
Alas that I was wrought, why nere I deed
O dere wyfe, o gemme, o lustyhed
That were to me so sad, and eke so trewe
Now lyest thou deed, with face pale of hewe
Ful gylteles, that durst I swere twys
O rakell honde, to do so foule amys
O troubled wit, o yre recheles
That vnauysed smytest gylteles
O wantrust, ful of fals suspection
Where was thy wyt and thy discrecion
Oh, euery man beware of rekylnesse
Ne trow no thyng, without stronge witnesse
Smyte not to sone, er thou wete why
And be auysed wel and sykerly
Or ye do any execution
Upon your yre, for suspection
Alas, a thousande folke hath rekel yre
Fully for done, and brought hem in the myre
Alas for sorow I wol my selfe slee
And to the crowe, o false theef said he
I wol quite anon thy false tale
Thou songe whilom, lyke a nyghtyngale
Now shalt thou false theef, thy song forgon
And eke thy whyte fethers euerychone
Ne neuer in al thy lyfe shalte thou speke
Thus shul men on a traytour be awreke
Thou and thyn ofspring euer shal be blake
Ne neuer swete noyse shal ye make
But euer cryen ayenst tempest and rayne
In token, that through the my wyfe is slayne
And to the crowe he stert, and that anon
And pulled of his whyte fethers euerychon
And made him blacke, and reft him al his songe
And eke his speche, and out at doze him stongue
Into the dyuel, whiche I him betake
And for this cause ben al crowes blake.
Lordinges, by this ensample I wol you pray
Beware, and take kepe what I say
Ne telleth neuer no man in your lyfe
How that an other man hath dight his wyfe
He wol you hate mortally certayne
Dan Salomon, as wise clerkes sayne
Techeth a man to kepe his tonge well
But as I sayd, I am not techel
But nathelesse, thus taught me my dame
My sonne thinke on the crowe a goddes name
My son kepe wel thy tonge, and kepe thy frende
A wycked tonge is worse than a fende
My sonne from a fende men may hem bless
My sonne, god of his endeles goodnesse
Walled a tonge with teth, and lyppes eke
For man shulde him auyse what he speke
My sonne, ful ofte for to mykel speche
Hath many a man be spylte, as clerkes teche
But for lytel speche, spoken auysedly
Is no man shente, to speke generally
My sonne, thy tonge shuldest thou restrayne
At al tymes, but whan thou doest thy payne
To speke of god, in honour and prayere
The first vertue sonne, if thou wolt lere
Is to restrayne, and kepe wel thy tonge
Thus lerne childzen, whan they be yonge
My sonne, of mykel spekyng vnauysed
(There lasse spekyng had ynough suffysed)
Cometh mykel harme, thus was me taught
In mocke speche, synne wanteth naught
Wostu wherfore a rakel tonge serueth
Right as a sword forcutteth and forkerueth
An arme on two, my dere sonne right so
A tonge cutteth frendshyp al a two
A iangler is to god abhominable

Rede

Rede Salomon, so wise and honourable
Rede Dauid in his psalmes, rede Senecke
My sone speke not, ne with thy heed becke
Dissymule as ꝑ were deefe, if ꝑ thou here
The iangloure speketh of perlous matere.
The kemyng sayth, lerne if that thou leste
That lytel ianglyng causeth moche reste
My sonne, if ꝑ no wicked worde hast sayde
The dare not drede for to be bewrayde
But he that hath missayd, I dare well sayne
He may by no way clepe his worde agayne
Thing that is said, is said, & forth it gothe
Though him repent, or him be neuer so lothe
He is thral to him, to whom he hath sayde
A tale, for which he is now yuel apayde
My sonne beware, & be none auctour newe
Of tydynges, whether they be false or trewe
Where so thou come, amonge hye or lowe
Kepe wel thy tonge, & thynke on the crowe

¶ Here endeth the Manciples tale, and here begynneth the Plowmans Prologue.

THe ploweman plucked vp his
plowe
When my discomfet mone was
comen in
And said his beestes shuld eate
nowe
And lige in the graffe vp to the chin
They ben feble both ore and cowe
Of hem wys left but bone and skynne
The stele of here and coultre of drowe
And honged his harnys on a pynne

He toke his tabarde and his staffe eke
And on his heed he set his hat
And said he wolde saynte Thomas seke
On pylgrymage he goth forth plat
In scrippe he bare both bred and lekes
He was forswonke and all forswat
Men myst haue sen through both his chekes
And euery wang toth and where it sat

¶ Our host beheld wel al about
And saw this man was sumne ybrent
He knew wel by hys senged snoute
And by his clothes that were to rent
He was a man wonte to walke about
He nas not alway in cloystre ypent
He coulde not religiously be lout
And therfore was he fully shent.

¶ Our host him axed, what man art thou
Sir qꝺ he, I am an hyne
For I am wont to go to the plow
And erne my meate yet that I dyne
To swette and swinke I make auowe
My wyfe and children therwith to fynde
And serue god and I wil howe
But we lewde men bene ful blynde.

¶ For clerkes say we shullen be sayne
For her iyuelod swette and swynke
And they right nought vs gyue agayne
Neither to eate ne yet to drynke
They mowe by law, as they sayne
Vs curse and dampne to hell brynke
Thus they putten vs to payne
With candles queynt and belles clynke

¶ They make vs thralles at her lust
And sayne we mowe not els be saued
They haue the corne and we the dust
Who speketh there agayne they say be raued
¶ What man, qꝺ our host canst thou preache
Come nere and tel vs some holy thynge
Sir quod he, I herde ones teache
A prest in pulpyt a good preachynge.

¶ Say on quod our host, I the beseche
Sir I am redy at your bydding
I praye you that no man me reproche
While that I am my tale telling.

¶ Thus endeth the prologue, and here folowth the fyrst parte of the tale.

A Sterne strife is stered newe
In many sedes in a stounde
Of sondry sedes that be sewe
It semeth that some ben vnsounde
For some be great growen vngrounde
Some bene souple, symple and small
Whether of hem is falser founde
The falser foule mote hem befall

That one syde is that I of tell
Popes, Cardynals and Prelates
Parsons, Monkes, and Freers fell
Priours, Abbottes of grete estates
Of heuyn and hell they kepe the yeates

And peters successours they ben all
This is demed by olde dates
But falshed foule mought it befall

The other syde ben poore and pale
And people put out of prease
And seme cayrysses sore a cale
And euer in one without encrease
I clepeth lollers and londlese
Who toreth on hem they bene vntall
They ben arayed al for the peace,
But falshed foule more it befall.

Many a countrey haue I sought
To knowe the falser of these two
But euer my trauayle was for nought
Al so frere as I haue go
But as I wandred in a wro
In a wedde beside a wall
Two fowles sawe I syt tho
The falser foule mote hym befall

That one dyd plete on the popes syde
A gryffon of a grymme stature
A pellycane withouten pryde
To these lollers layde his lure
He mused his matter in measure
To counsayle Christ euer gan he call
The gryffon shewed as sharpe as fyre
But falshed foule more it befall.

The pellycane began to preache
Of the of mercy and of mekenesse
And sayde that Christ so gan vs teache
And meke and mercyable gan blesse
The Euangely beareth witnesse
A lambe he lykeneth Christ ouer all
In tokenynge that he mekest was
With pride was out of heuen fall.

And so shoulde euery Christened be
Preestes, peters successours
Both lowlyche and of lowe degre
And vsen none erthly honours
Neither crowne, ne curious couertours
Ne pylloure, ne other proude pall
Ne noughte to cofren vp great treasours
For falshed foule more it befall.

Preestes shoulde for no catteil plede
But chasten hem in charyte
Ne to no bateyle shoulde men lede
For inhaulynge of her awne degree
Nat wylne sittynges in hye see
Ne souerayntye in house ne hall
All worldely worshyppe defye and flee
For who so wylleth highnes foule shal fall.

Alas who may suche sayntes call
That wyl neth welde erthly honour
As lowe as Lucifere suche shall fall
In balefull blackenesse ybuylden her bowr
That eggeth the people to errour
And maketh them to hem thrall
To Christ I holde suche one traytour
As lowe as Lucifer suche one shall fall

That willeth to be kynges peeres
And higher than the Emperour
Some that were but poore freers
Nowe wollen ware a warryour
God is not her gouernour
That holdeth no man his permagall
Whyle couetyse is her counsaylour
Al suche falshed more nede fal

That hye on horse wylleth ryde
In glyttrande golde of great araye
I paynted and portred all in pryde
No common knyght may go so gaye
Chaunge of clothyng euery daye
With golden gyrdels great and small
As boystous as is bere at baye
Al suche falshed more nede fall.

With pride punished the poore
And some they sustayne with sale
Of holy churche maketh an hore
And fylleth her wombe with wyne and ale
With money fylled many a male
And chasteen churches when they fall
And telleth the people a leude tale
Suche false faytours foule hem befall

With chaunge of many maner meates
With songe and solas syttyng longe
And fylleth her wombe, and fast freres
And from the meate to the gonge
And after meate with harpe and songe
And eche man mote hem lordes call
And hote spyces euer amonge
Suche false faytours foule hem fall.

And myters mo than one or two
I perled as the quenes heed
I flatte of golde, and pyrry so

Asbeny as it were made of lead
With clothe of golde bothe newe and redde
With glytteraude golde as greene as gall
By dome wyl dampne men to deed
Al suche faytours foule hem fall.

¶ And Christes people proudely curse
With brode boke, and brayinge bell
To putte pennyes in her purse
They wol sel bothe heuen and hell
And in her sentence and thou wylte dwell
They wyllen gesse in her gay hall
And though the soth thou of hem tell
In great cursyng shalt thou fall

¶ That is blessed, that they blesse
And cursed that they curse woll
And thus the people they oppresse
And haue their lordshyppes at full
And many be marchaundes of woll
And to purs pennyes wol come thrall
The pore people they all to pull
Suche false faytours foule hem fall

Lordes mote to hem loute
Obeysaunt to her brode blessynge
They ryden with her royal route
On a courser, as it were a kynge
With sadle of golde glytteryng
With curious harneys quayntly crallit
Stroppes gaye of golde mastlyng
Al suche falshed foule befal it

Christes ministers clepen they bene
And tulen al in robberye
But Antichriste they seruen clene
Arryed all in tyraunnye
Unnesse of Johns prophecie
That antichriste is her admirall
Tyrelers arryed in trecherye
Al suche faytours foule hem fall

¶ Who sayth that some of hem may synne
He shalbe dome to be deed
Some of hem woll gladly wynne
Al ayenst that whiche god forbed
Al holyest they clepen her heed
That of her rule is regall
Alas that euer they eeten breed
For al suche falshed woll foule fall

¶ Her heed loueth all honour
And to be worshypped in word and dede
Kyng's mote to hem knele and coure
To the apostles, that Christ forbede
To popes hestes suche taketh more hede
Than to kepe Christes commaundement
Of gold and syluer more ben her wede
They holdeth him hole omnipotent

¶ He ordayneth by his ordynaunce
To parishe prestes a powere
To another a greater auaunce
A greater power to his mistere
But for he is highest in erth here
To him reserueth he many a point
But to Christ that hath no pere
Reserueth he neyther oppyn no loynt

¶ So semeth he aboue all
And Christ aboue him nothinge
Whan he sytteth in his stall
Dampneth and saueth as him thynke
Suche pride tofore god doth stynke
An angel bad John to him not knele
But only to god do his bowynge
Such willers of worshyp must nede euill fele

They ne clepen Christ, but sanctus deus
And clepen her heed Sanctissimus
They that suche a secte sewis
I trowe they taken hem amysse
In erth here they haue her blysse
Her hie master is Belzebub
Christes people from hem wysse
For al suche false wyll foule fall

¶ They mowe both bynde and lose
And all is for her holy lyfe
To saue or dampne they mowe chose
Betwene hem now is great stryfe
Many a man is kylled with a knyfe
To wete which of hem haue lordshyp shall
For suche Christ suffred woundes fyue
For all suche falshed wyll foule fall

Christ said: Qui gladio percutit
Wyth swerde shall dye
He bad his prestes peace and greth
And bad hem not drede for to dye
And bad them be both symple and slye
And carke not for no catrell
And trusteth on god that sitteth on hye
For al false shall foule fall

These wollen make men to swere

Ayens Christes commaundement
And Christes members al to tere
On roode, as he were newe ytent
Suche lawes they maken by commen assent
Eche on it chowerd as a ball
Thus the poore be fully shent
But euer falshed foule it befall

¶ They dren no symonye
But sellen churches and priorye
Ne they dren no enuye
But curssen al hem contrarye
And hyzeth men by dayes and yeres
With strength to holde hem in her stall
And culleth all her aduersaries
Therfore falshed foule thou fall

¶ With purse they purchase personage
With purse they parsonn hem to plede:
And men of warre they wol wage
To bringe her enemys to the dede
And lordes lyues they wol lede
And muche take and gyue but smal
But he it forget, from it shal sprede
And make suche falshe ryght foule fall

¶ They halowe norbyng but for pryde
Churche, font, ne bellement
And make orders in euery syde
Our priestes per for the parchement
Of fauours they taken rent
Therwith they fynde the queres shall
For many churches ben ofte fulfylled
And al suche falshed yet foule it fall

¶ Some leueth not in leccherye
But haunten wenches, wyndowes, & wiuers
And purchaseth the poore for purree
Them self it vseth al their lyues
And but a man to them shryues
To heuen come he neuer shall
He shal be cursed as he caytyues
To hell they sayne that he shal fall

¶ There was more mercy in Barimyen
And in Nero, that neuer was good
Than is nowe in some of them
Whan he hath on his furred hoode
They folowe Christ that shed his bloode
To heuen, as buckette in to the mall
Suche wreches ben worse than woode
And al suche faytours foule hem fall

¶ They gyue her almes to the ryche
To maynteynours, and to men of lawe
For to lordes they wol be lyche
In harlottes sonne not worthe an hawe
Sothfastnesse suche han sawe
They kembe her crokettes with christall
And drede of god they haue downe drawe
Al suche faytours foule hem fall

¶ They maken parsons for the penyye
And canons of her Cardynals
Vnnethes amongst hem al any
That he ne hath glosed the gospel fals
For Christe made neuer no cardynals
Ne with him was no cardynall
With a redde hatte as dren mynstrals
But falshed foule more it befall

¶ Their tythyng, and her offryng bothe
They clymeth it by possession
Therof nyll they none forgo
But robben men as raunsome
The tythynge of Thrpe lucrum
With these masters is mynall
Tythynge of bubry, and lechon
Al make falshed full foule to fall

¶ They taken to frame her sompnours
To harme the people what they may
To pardoners, and false fayrours
Sell her soules I hate well fare
And al to holden great arraye
To multeplye hem more metall
They bicke ful ryche domes day
Ah hem al suche shal foule fall

Suche harlottes shul men bicklaumber
For they shullen make her grey
And ben as proude as Alexander
And fayne to the poore, woo be ye
But yet ech priest shal paye hys fee
To enterrate hys lemmans call
Suche herbes shul wel yuel the
And al suche falsse shul foule fall

And yf a man be falsely famed
And wol make purgacioun
Than wol the officers be agramed
And all gyue hym fro towne to towne
So he be muste pay raunsome
Though he be clene, as is christall
And then haue an absolution
But al suche falsse shul foule fall

¶ Though he be gylty of the dede
And that he may money pay
Alde whyle hys purse wol bede
He may vse it fro day to day
These bishopes officers gone ful gay
And thys game they vsen ouer all
The poore to pyl is al their praye
Al suche falsr shull foule fall

¶ Alas god ordayned neuer suche lawe
Ne no suche craste of courtyse
He forbad it by his lawe
Such gouernours mowen of god agryse
For al his rules is ryghtwyse
These newe poynres ben pure papall
And goddes lawe they dispice
And al suche fayrours shul foule fall.

¶ They sayne that peter had the key
Of heuen and helle to haue and holde
Thenne peter take no money
For no synne that be solde
Suche successours ben to bolde
To assoyle all their lewte they wyll
Her conscience is waxen colde
And al suche fayrours foule hem fal.

¶ Peter was neuer so grete a fole
To lene hys key with suche a tayll
Lete take suche cursed suche a role
He was aferde nothyng wel
Thenne they haue the key of hell
Then mayster is of that place maye hall
Further they bydden hem to dwell
And wyth falle lucifer there to fall.

¶ They ben as proude as lucyfarre
As angry and as euryous
From good fayth they ben ful farre
Couetyse they ben eury ous
To smyte sadel as coureous
As pounde, that for hunger wol fall
Lyghtly, and longe tactous
And nedely suche falsehed shal foule fall.

¶ The pope and he mete peters heyre
Whe thynke he erreth in thys case
Whan chefe of bysshops is in despayre
To chosen hem in bruers place
Alothe shall wynne to hym for grace
For bis clothe anone pray he shall
So that he spende hys purchase
And al suche falle foule hem fall.

¶ Though he can no more good
A lordes prayer shalbe spedde
Though he be wylde of wyt or wood
Yet vnderstanding what men han redde
A leude boster, and that god forbedde
As good a bisshoppe is my horse tail
Suche a pope is foule beseede
And al falle wol foule fal.

¶ He maketh bysshops for erthlye thanke
And nothing for Christes sake
Suche that ben ful fare and ranke
To foule ale none bede they take
Al is wel done what euer they make
For they shal answere at ones for all
For worldes thanke, suche moch and make
And al suche falle shal foule fall.

¶ Suche that can nat her Crede
Ne with prayer shul be made prelates
Nother cunne the gospell rede
Suche shull nowe ryde hye estates
The hye goddes frendshyp hem makes
Ther to reth on her summe for all
Suche bere the keyes of heuenes gates
And suche falle shall foule fall

¶ Ther forsake for Christes lone
Ryalte hunger thurst, and colde
For they ben ordred ouer al aboue
Out of rounde well they ben holde
By the dore they go, nat in to the folde
To helpe their shepe they nought vsuall
Hyred men all suche I holde
And al suche falle foule hem fall

¶ For shull our kyng they wol forsake
And shewe him nought for hys powere
For Christes lone they wol make
And diuine pryment ale apayre
Of god they serue nothyng a fryde
As Judy lyueth, as dyd Annual
And thruen her shepe into desert
Al suche fayrours shul foule fall.

¶ Christ hath xii. Apostels here
Neuer fayr they, there may be but one
That may not erre in no maneere
Who leueth not this hem lotte schone
Peter erred, so dyd not John
Why is he cleped the principall
Christe cleped hym Peter, but by myselfe the
Al falle fayrours foule hem fall. stone
why

¶ Why cursen they the croysery
Christes christen creatures
For bytwene hem is now enuy
To be enhaunsed in honours
And Christen lyuers with her labours
For they leuyn ouno man mortall
But do to deth with dishonours
And al suche false foule hem fall

¶ What knoweth a tyllour at the plowe
The popes name, and what he hate
Hys crede sufficeth to him ynowe
And knoweth a cardynall by his hatte
Roughis the poore vnrightly latte
That knoweth Christ hys god royall
Suche matters be not worth a gnatte
But suche false faytours foule hem fall

I kneg shal knele and kysse his showe
Christ suffered a synful to kysse hys fete
Me thynketh he holdeth him hye ynowe
So Lucifer did, that hye set
Suche one me thynketh hym selfe forget
Eyther to the trouth he was nat call
Christe that suffered woundes wete
Shall make suche falshed foule fall

They layeth out her large nettes
For to take syluer and golde
Fyllen coffers, and sackes fettes
There as they soules catche sholde
Her seruauntes be to them vnholde
But they can doublyn they? rentall
To bygge hem castles, & bygge hem holde
And all suche false foule hem fall.

Here endeth the first part of thys tale and here after folowyth the seconde parte.

¶ Shortely to shende hem, and shewe nowe
Howe wrongfully they werche and walke
O hye god, nothyng they tell, ne howe
But in goddes worde, tellyth many a balke
In harnes holde hem and in halke
And preachen of tythes and offrende
And vntruely of the gospell talke
For his mercy god it amende

¶ What is Antichriste to saye
But cuyn Christes aduersarye
Suche hath nowe ben many a daye
To Christes biddyng ful contraye
That from the trueth clene warry
Out of the way they ben wende
And Christes people vntruely cary
God for his pitye it amende

¶ They lyuen contrary to Christes like
In hye pryde agaynst mekenesse
Agaynst suffraunce they vsen stryfe
And angre ayenst sobrenesse
Agaynst wisedome wylfulnesse
To Christes rules lytel tende
Agaynst measure outragiousnesse
But whan god wol it may amende

¶ Lordely lyfe ayenst lowelynesse
And demyn all without mercy
And couetyse ayenste largesse
Agaynst trewethe trechery
And agaynst alinesse enuy
Agaynst Christ they comprehende
For chastite they mayntayne lechery
God for hys grace this amende

¶ Agaynst penaunce they vse delyghtes
Agaynst suffraunce stronge defence
Ayenst god they vsen cuyll tyghtes
Ayenst pytye punyshementes
Open cuyl ayenst conyvence
Her wicked wynnyng worse dispende
Sobrenesse they sette in to dispence
But god for his goodnesse it amende

¶ Why clergmen they holy his powere
And wranglen ayenst al his hestes
Hys lyuyng folowe they nothyng here
But lyuen worse than witlesse beestes
Of fythe and flesche they louen festes
As lordes they ben brode yshende
Of goddes poore they haten gestes
God for his mercy thys amende

I Accorde vp this worde fall
No more Englishe can I fynde
Shewe another now I shall
For I haue moch to saye behynde
How prestes han the people pynde
As cutteys Christe hath me kynde
And put thys matter in my mynde
To make thys maner men amende

¶ With dyuers suche shall haue her dome
That sayne that they be Christes frendes
And do nothyng as they shulde done
Al suche ben falser than ben fendes
On the people they ley suche bendes
As god is in erth they han offende
Succour for suche Christe nowe sende vs
And for his mercy thys amende

¶ Token of Antichriste they be
His careckes ben nowe wyde yknowe
Receyued to preche shall no man be
Without token of hym I trowe
Of the christen preest, to prechyn owe
From god aboue they ben sende
Goddes worde, to al folke for to showe
Synful man for to amende

¶ Christ sent the poore for to preche
The royal ryche he dyd not so
Nowe dare no poore the people teache
For Antichrist is ouer all her foe
Amongs the people he more go
Where hath bidden, al suche suspende
Some hath he hent, and thinketh yet mo
But al this god may wel amende

¶ Al tho that han the worlde forsake
And lyuen lowly, as god badde
Into her prison shullen be take
Dryn and bounden, and forth ladde
Herof I rede no man be draddc
Christ sayde, hys shulde be shende
Of the man ought hereof be glade
For god ful well it wol amende

¶ They take on hem royall power
And say they haue swerdes two
The curse to hel, one slee men here
For this taking Christ had no mo
Yn Peter had of tho
But Christ, to Peter smyte gan defende
And in to the sheth badde put it tho
And al suche mischeues god amende

¶ Christ badde Peter kepe hys shepe
And with his swerde forbade hym smyte
Swerde is no tole with shepe to kepe
But to shepherdes that shepe wol byte
Me thynketh suche shepherdes ben to wyte
Ben her shepe with swerde that contende
They dryue her shepe with great dispyte
But al this god may wel amende

¶ So successours to Peter be they nought
Whome Christe made these pasture
A swerde no shepherde vsen ought
But he wolde slee, as a bochoure
For who so were Peters successoure
Shulde bere his shepe tyl his backe bende
And shadowe hem from euery shoure
And al this god may wel amende

Successours to Peter ben these
In that, that Peter Christe forsoke
That had leuer the loue of god lese
Than a shepherde had to lese hys hoke
He culleth the shepe as doth the coke
Of hem taken they wol vntrende
And falsely glose the gospell boke
God for his mercy hem amende

¶ After Christ had take Peter the kay
Christ sayde, he must dye for man
That Peter to Christ gan withsay
Christe bad hym go behynde sathan
Suche counsaylours many of these men han
For worldes wele, god to offende
Peters successours they ben for than
But al suche god may wel amende

¶ For sathan is to say no more
But he that contrary to Christ is
In this they lerne Peters lore
They sewen hym whan he dyd mysse
They folowe Peter forsoth in this
In al that Christ woulde Peter reprehende
But nat in that, that lyketh to beryn blysse
God for his mercy hem amende

¶ Some of the apostels they sewe in case
Of ought that I can vnderstonde
Hym that betrayed Christ, Judas
That bare the purse in euery londe
And al that he might sette on bonde
He hydde and stale, and mispende
Lys rule these traytours han in honde
Almighty god hem amende

¶ And at the last hys lorde gan trap
Cursedly through hys false conetyse
So wolde these trayne hym for money
And they wysten in what wyse
They be seker of the selfe enuyse
From al sothnesse they ben frende
And couetyse chaungen with queyntyse
Almighty god al suche amende

Where

¶ Were Christ on erth here efte sone
These wolde dampne him to dye
Al his bestes they han fordone
And sayne his sawes ben heresye
And avenste his commaundementes they crye
And dampne al his to be brende
For it lyketh not hem suche losengerye
God almighty hem amende

¶ These han more myght in Englande here
Than hath the kyng and all his lawe
They han purchased hem suche powere
To taken hem whom lyst not knawe
And say that heresye is her sawe
And so to prison wol hym sende
It was not so by elder dawe
God for hys mercy it amende

¶ The kynges lawe wol no man deme
Ingeryche without answere
But if any man these misqueme
He shal be baryghteth as a bere
And yet wol worse they wolh im tete
And in prison woll hem pende
In gyves, and other grete
What god wol, it may amende

¶ The kynge tareth nat his men
But by assent of the comunynalte
But these eche yere wol raunsom hem
Parysherfullye, more than dothe he
Her scales by yere better be
Than is the kynges in erlende
Her officers han greater fee
But thys mischefe god amende

¶ For who so wol proue a testament
That is nat all worth temme pounde
He shal pave for the parchement
The thirde of the money all rounde
Thus the people is raunsounde
They save suche parte to hem shulde apende
There as they gryden it gothe to grounde
God for hys mercye it amende

¶ A symple fornycacion
Twentye shyllynges he shall pay
And than have an absolucion
And al the yere ben it forthe he may
Thus they letten hem go a stray
They recke nat thoughe the soule be brende
These kepen wel Peters kay
And al suche heperdes god amende

¶ Wonder is, that the parlyamente
And all the lordes of thys londe
Here to taken so lytel entente
To helpe the people out of her honde
For they ben harder in their bonde
Worse beate, and better brende
Than to the kyng is vnderstande
God him helpe this to amende

What bishoppes, what religions
Han in thys lande as muche lay fee
Lordeshyppes and possessyons
More than Lordes, it seemeth me
That maketh hem lese charite
They mowe not to god attende
In earth they have so hyghe degre
God for hys mercy it amende

The Emperour yaf the pope sometyme
So hugh lordeshyp hym about
That at laste the sely kyme
The proude Pope put hym out
So of thys realme is in dout
But lordes beware and them defende
For nowe these folke be wonders stoute
The kyng and lordes nowe this amende

Thus endeth the seconde parte of thys tale, and herafter folowerth the thirde.

MOyses lawe forbode it tho
That preestes shoulde no lordeshyppes welde
Christes gospell byddeth also
That they shulde no lordshippes helde
As Christes apostels were neuer so bolde
No suche lordeshyppes to hem enbrace
But smeren her shepe and kepe her folde
God amende hem for his grace

For they ne ben but counterfete
Men may knowe hem by her fruite
Her gretnesse maketh hem god forgete
And take his mekenesse in dispite
And they were poore and had but lyte
They nolde nat demen after the face
But norysshe her shepe, and hem nat byte
God amende hem for hys grace

Grisson.

What canst thou preche ayenst chanons

That

That men clepen secularer
Hem. They ben curates of many townes
In erth they haue great powere
They haue great prebendes and dere
Some two or thre, and some mo
A personage to ben a playeng fere
And yet they serue the kynge also

¶ And let to ferme all that fare
To whom that wol moste gyue therfore
Some wol spende, and some woll spare
And some wol laye it vp in store
Of cure of soule they care not fore
So they mowe money take
Whether her soules be wonne or lore
Her profytes they woll not forsake

¶ They haue a gedering procuratour
That can the pore people enpike
And robben hem as a raueynour
And to his lorde they money lede
And catche of quycke and eke of dede
And richen him and his lorde eke
And to robbe the poore can gyue good rede
Of olde and yonge, of hole and syeke

¶ Therwith they purchase hem lay fee
In londe, there hem lyketh best
And buylde also brode as a tyte
Both in the East, and eke in the west
To purchase thus they ben ful prest
But on the poore they woll nought spende
Ne no good gyue to goddes gest
Ne sende him some that all hath sende

¶ By her seruyce suche wol lyue
And trusse that other into treasure
Though all her parysshe dye vnshriue
They wol nat gyue a rose floure
Her syre shulde be as a myrrour
Both to lered and to leude also
And teche the people her lele labour
Such myster men ben al mysgo

¶ Some of hem ben harde nygges
And some of hem ben proude and gay
Some spende her good vpon gygges
And fynden hem of great aray
Alas, what thynke these men to say
That thus dispenden goddes good
At the dredeful domes daye
Suche wrecches shull be worse than wood

¶ Some her churches neuer ne sye
Ne neuer o penye, thyder ne sende
Though the poore parishens for hunger dye
O peny on hem wyll they not spende
Haue they treepynynge of the tende
They recke neuer of the remenaunt
Alas, the Deuyl hath clene hem blende
Such one is Sathanas sotourmant

And vsen horedome and harlotry
Couetyse, pompe, and pride
Slouthe, wratthe, and eke enuy
And sewen synne by euery syde
Alas, where thynke suche to abyde
Howe wol they accompies yelde
From hye god they mowe hem not hyde
Suche wylfers wytte is not worth a nelde

They ben so roted in richesse
That Christes power is forget
Serued wyth so many messe
Hem thinketh that Manna is no mete
Al is good that they mowe gete
They weine to lyue euermore
But whan god at dome is set
Suche treasour is a feble store

Vnneth mote they matyns say
For countyng and courtholdynge
And yet he tangeleth as a taye
And vnderstont hun selfe nothyng
He wol serue both erle and kynge
For his lyuelyng and his fee
And hyde his tythyng and his offrynge
This is a feble charite

Other they ben proude, or coueytous
Or they ben harde, or hungry
Or they ben lyberall or lecherous
Or els medlers with marchandry
Or mayntayners of men with maystry
Or stewardes, countours, or pledours
And serue god in ypocrysy
Such prestes ben Christes false traytours

They bene false, they ben vengeable
And begyten men in Christes name
They ben vnstedfast and vnstable
To tray her lorde, hem thynketh no shame
To serue god they ben ful lame
Goddes theues, and falsely shrie
And falsely goddes worde defame
In wynnynge is her worldes wele.

¶ Antichrist shold serue all
I pray the who may say nay
With Antichrist suche shull fall
They folowen hym in dede and fay
They seruen hem in riche array
To serue Christ suche falsely farne
Why, at the dredefull domes day
Shul they not folow him to payne

¶ That knowen hem selfe that they done yll
Ayenst Christes commaundement
And amende hem neuer ne will
But serue satan by one assent
Who saith forth be shalbe shent
Or spekeh ayenst her falsse lyuyng
Who so wil lyueth shalbe lyent
For suche ben greatter than the kyng

¶ Pope, Bishoppes, and Cardinals
Chanons, Persons, and vycars
In godes seruice I trowe ben fals
That sacramentes sellen dere
And ben as proude as Lucifere
Eche man loke whether that I lye
Who so speketh ayenst her powere
It shal be holden heresye

¶ Loke howe many orders take
Clerly of Christ, for his seruice
That the worldes goodes forsake
Who so taketh orders, or other wyse
I trowe that they shall soon agryse
For al the glose that they conne
All semeth not thas allyse
In yuel tyme they thus begonne

¶ Loke how many among hem al
Holden not thys lye mayr
With Antichrist they shullen fall
For they wollen gold betraye
God amende hem that hell maye
For many men they makeh shende
They weren well the sothe I saye
But the deuyl hath soule hem blende

¶ Come on her churches dwell
Apparailled poorly, proude of poore
The seuen sacramentes they done sell
Incontell catchyng is her comforte
Of eche matter they wollen mell
And done hem wronge is her disporte
To affray the people they ben fell
And holde hem lower then doth the lorde

¶ For the tythynge of a ducke
Or of an apple, or an aye
They make men sweare vpon a boke
Thus they foulen Christes fay
Suche bearen ynell heauen kay
They mowen assoyle, they mowe shryue
With mens wyues strongly play
With true tylers flutte and stryue

¶ At the wrestlynge, and at the wake
And chefe chauntours at the nale
Parkerre bearers, and medlyng make
Hoppen and houten with bruc and bale
At fayre fresshe, and at wyne sale
Dyne and drinke, and make debate
The seuen sacramentes sit at sayle
How kepe suche the kayes of heuen gate

¶ Pens wyues they wollen holde
And though that they ben right sore
To speake they shullnot be so bolde
For somparyng to the confessour
And make hem saye mouth I lye
Though they it saine with her eye
Hys lemman holden opynlye
No man so hardy to say why

He shall haue tythyng and offrynge
Wrangle wholeheuer it grutche
And chyde on the day be shall synge
Of obites pitaffes nere none suche
He moste on bonerynge with boggy and bicke
And blowen hys bonke, and crouen her
And louery him as a lowesse
Suche hepen yuell Christs lay

Yet they moste haue some flocke or flone
Clothe parured, and proudely dyght
To make men lyuen vpon
And sey that it is ful of myght
Bout suche men set up great lyght
Other suche flockes shull shende eyther
As darke as it were mydnyght
For it may make no shadry

That is lyuely people is mowe
Thou Pery, thou worchest wonder thynges
About that, that men offren to nowe
Wrongen brooches, ouches, and rynges
The preest purchaseth the offryngs
But he will offer to none vmage
Who is the foule that he for syngeth
That preacheth for suche a pylgrymage

¶ Tomen and women that ben poze
That ben Chriſtes awne lykeneſſe
Ben ſhullen offre at her doze
That ſuffre hunger and diſtreſſe
And to ſuche ymages offre leſſe
That mowe not fele thurſtne colde
The poze in ſpirite gan Chriſt bleſſe
Therfore offreth to feble and olde

¶ Buckelers brode, and ſwerdes longe
Baudryke, with baſelardes kene
Such tales aboute her neche they honge
As tub Antichriſt ſuche prieſtes bene
Upon her bedes it is well ſene
Whom they ſeruen, whom they honozen
Fendſhipes they ben clene
And goddes goodes fully deuouren

¶ Of ſcarlet and grene gay gownes
That moet be chape for the ſeaſone
Cordyned and kyrtles coutered in rotunes
The bameleres that to the dauncer ſeruе
Coloured clothes to ſeruе her berde
With longe pykes on her ſhoone
Yet goddes goſpel is not true
Other they ſeruen the deuil or none

¶ Now ben purſes pokes ſo wyde
That men muſt enlarge the veſtrumente
The holy goſpel they bende bi de
In the contrarium in tayllemente
Such purſes of ſylker ben ſeruе
Her conqueſtours they ben alyde
The pouche pendauntes at her ars vpryſe
Fully the truth they ben betrayde

¶ Shrift ſitteth ſuche wyſſen alle is
And wolle men creepe to the crouche
Some of the ſacramentes ſaue at leaſe
Whome me be that no man touche
For her biſhop them warant bouche
That is lauе of the berte
With mebe and mawe thus they mouche
And thus they layne la chartre

¶ In the myddes of her maſſe
They nyl haue no man but for hyre
And ful ſhortly let forth paſſe
Such ſhul men fynde in eche ſhyre
That perſonages for profyte deſyre
To ſeruе in lyking and in luſtes
I dare not ſayne, Gods ore ico dyre
That ſuche benamed chriſtes prieſtes

¶ Or they yef the biſhoppes why
Or they more ben in his ſeruice
And holden forth her harlotry
Suche prelates ben of feble empryſe
Of goddes greme ſuche men agryſe
For ſuche matters that taken mede
Howe they excuſe hem, and in what wyſe
Me thynketh they ought greatly drede

¶ They ſayne that it to no man longeth
To reproue them though they erre
But falſely goddes goodes they fongeth
And therwith maynteine bio and werre
Her bedes ſhulde be as bright as ſterre
Her truthe, leude mannes ſyght
They ſay the pope may not erre
Lede muſt that paſſe mannes myght

¶ Though a prieſt lye with his léman all nyght
And tellen his felow, and he him
He goth to maſſe anone right
And ſaieth he fyngereth out of ſynne
His bryde abydeth him at his ynne
And he gloſeth his dinner the meane while
He fyngereth his maſſe for he wolde winne
And ſo he weneth god begyle

Them thenketh longe til they be mette
And that they ben forth all the yere
And eche the folke to hem he is fette
He holdeth no man halfe his pete
If the biſhop be hath power
To ſlepe men at his pleaſure
His abſolucion may make them there
And who is the ſoule that he fongeth for

The deuyſion began for to ſpreke
And laide of monkes cam thou ought
The phyſicyan ſayd, they ben full grete
And in this world muche woe hath wrought
Sayne Benet, that her order brought
Ne made them neuer on ſuche maniere
I trowe it came neuer in his thought
That they ſhulde vſe ſo great power

That a man ſhulde a monke lorde call
He ſerueth not, as I ſuppoſe
He is as proude as pyonce, in pall
In meate, and drynke, and all thynge
Some wearen myter and ryngе
With double worſted well dyght
With royall meate and ryche drynke
And rideth in a courſer as a kynghte

¶ With hauke and with houndes eke
With broches or ouches on his hoode
Some say no masse in all a weke
Of deinties is her most foode
With lordshyppes and with bondmen
This is a royall religion
Saint Benet made neuer none of hem
To haue lordshyp of man ne towne

¶ Now they ben queynte and curious
With fyne clothe clad and serued cleane
Proude, angry, and enuyous
Malyce is muche that they meane
In catchyng crafty and couetous
Lordly lyuen in great lykynge
This liuing is not religious
Accordyng to Benet in his liuinge

They ben clerkes, her courtes they ouersee
Her pore tenaunce fully they slyte
The hyer that a man a mercer be
The gladlier they woll it write
This is farre from Christes powerte
For all worth couetyse they endyte
On the pore they haue no pyte
Ne neuer hem cherysshe but euer him byte

¶ And commenly suche ben comen
Of pore people, and of hem begete
That this perfection han ynomen
Her fathers ryden nat but on her fete
And trauaylen sore for that they ete
In powert lyueth yonge and olde
Her fathers suffreth drought and wete
Many hungry meles, thurst, and colde

¶ And al this the monkes han forsake
For Christes loue and sainte Benette
To pride and ease haue hem take
This religion is euell beseate
Had they ben out of religion
They must haue hanged at the plowe
Threshyng a dykinge fro towne to towne
Wyth sory mete, and not halfe ynow

¶ Therfore they han this all forsake
And taken to ryches, pryde, and ease
Ful fewe for god woll monkes hem make
Lytel is such order for to prayse
Saynt Benet ordayned it not so
But bad hem be cherelyche
In churlyche maner lyue and go
Boystous in earth, and not lordly the

¶ They disclaunder saynt Benette
Therfore they haue his holy curse
Saint Benet with hem neuer mette
But if they thought to robbe his purse
I can no more hereof tell
But they ben lyke tho before
And clene serue the dyuel of hell
And ben his treasure and his store

¶ And al suche other counterfaitours
Chanons, Canons, and suche dysgysed
Ben goddes enemyes and traytours
His true religion han foule dispysed
Of freres I haue tolde before
In a makyng of a Crede
And yet I coulde tell worse and more
But men wolde werien it to rede

¶ As goddes goodnes no man tell might
Wyte ne speke, ne thinke in thought
So her falshed, and her vnright
May no man tell that euery god wrought
The Gryffon sayde, thou canst no good
Thou came neuer of no gentyl kynde
Other I trowe thou warest wood
Or els thou hast lost thy myynde

¶ Shulde holy churche haue no heede
Who shuld be her gouernayle
Who shulde her rule, who shuld her reede
Who shulde her forthren, who shuld auayle
Eche man shal lyue by his trauayle
Who best doth, shall haue most mede
With strength if men the churche assayle
With strength men must defende her nede

¶ And the pope were purely poore
Nedy, and nothyng ne hadde
He shulde be dryuen from dore to dore
The wicked of him nolde not be dradde
Of suche an heed men wolde be sadde
And synfully lyuen as hem lust
With strength, amendes suche be made
With wepen wolues from shepe be wust

¶ Yf the pope and prelates wolde
So begge, and bydde, bow and borowe
Holy churche shoulde stande ful colde
Her seruauntes syt and soupe sorowe
And they were noughty foule and horowe
To worshyp god men wold wlate
Both on euen and on morowe
Suche harlotry men wolde hate

Therfore

¶ Therfore men of holy churche
Shulde ben honest in all thinge
Worshipfully gods worckes werche
So semeth it to serue Christ her kynge
In honest and in clene clothynge
With vessels of golde and clothes riche
To god honestly to make offrynge
To his lordshyppe none is liche

¶ The Pellycan cast an houge crye
And said alas, why sayest thou so
Christ is our heed that syteth on hye
Neddes ne ought we haue no mo
We bene his membres both also
And father he taught vs to call him als
Maisters to be called defended he tho
Al other maisters ben wicked and fals

¶ That taketh maistry in hys name
Goostly, and for earthly good
Kynges and lordes shuld lordshyp haue
And rule the people with mylde mode
Christ for vs that shedde his blode
Bad his priestes no maystershyp haue
Ne carke not for cloth ne fode
From euery myschefe he wyl hem saue

Her riche clothing shalbe ryghtwysnesse
Her treasure, true lyfe shalbe
Charite shalbe her eyghesse
Her lordshyp shalbe vnite
Hope in god, her honeste
Her bestell clene conscience
Loore in spirite, and humilite
Shalbe holy churches defence.

¶ What said the Griffon may the greue
That other folkes faren wele
What hast thou to done with her lyue
Thy falsheed eche man may fele
For thou canst no cattell gete
But lyuest in londe as a lorel
With glosyng getest thou thy mete
So fareth the diuel that wonneth in hell

The wold that eche mā there shulde dwell
For he lyueth in clene enuye
So with the tales that thou doest tell
Thou woldest other people destrye
Wyth your glose, and your heresye
For ye can lyue no better lyfe
But clene in hipocrisye
And bryngest the in wo and strife

¶ And therwith haue not to done
For ye ne haue here no cure
Ye serue the dyuell, neyther god ne man
And he shal paye you youre hire
For ye wol fare well at festes
And warme clothed for the colde
Therfore ye glose goddes hestes
And begyle the people yonge and olde

¶ And al the seuen sacramentes
Ye speake ayenst, as ye were slye
Yeest tythinges, offrynges w your entētes
And on our lordes body falsly lye
And all thys ye done to lyue in ease
As who saith, there ben none suche
And sayne the pope is not worth a peese
To make the people ayen hym gruche

¶ And this commeth in by fendes
To bringe the christen in disaunce
For they wolde that no man were frendes
Leaue thy chatteryng with mischaunce
Yf thou lyue well, what wylt thou more
Let other men lyue as hem lyst
Spende in good, or kepe in store
Other mennes conscyence neuer thou wyste

¶ Ye han no cure to answere fore
What meddel ye, that han not to done
Let men lyue as they han done fore
For thou shalt answere for no man
The Pellican said, fy, nay
I dispised not the pope
Ne no sacrament, soth to say
But speake in charite and good hope

¶ But I dyspyse her hye pryde
Her richesse, that shulde be pore in spirite
Her wickednesse is know so wyde
They serue god in false habyte
And turnen mekenesse in to pryde
And lowlynesse in to hye degre
And goddes wordes turne and hide
And that am I moued by charyte

¶ To let men to lyue so
With al my conyng and al my might
And to warne men of her wo
And to tellen hem trouth and right
The sacramentes be soule hele
Yf they ben vsed in good vse
Ayenst that speake I neuer a dele
For then were I nothyng wyse

¶But they that vsen him in myſſe manere
Or ſet hem vp to any ſale
I trowe they ſhal abyte hem dere
This is my reaſon, this is my tale
Who ſo taketh hem vnryghtfullyche
Ayenſt the ten commaundementes
Or by gloſe wrechedlyche
Sellerth any of the ſacramentes

¶I trowe they do the deuell homage
In that they weten they do wronge
And therto I dare wel wage
They ſerue Satan for all her ſonge
To tythen and offren is holſome lyſe
So it be done in dewe manere
A man to houſelyn and to ſhryſe
Weddyng, and al the other mſere

¶So it be nother ſolde ne bought
Ne take ne gyue for couetyſe
And it be ſo taken it is nought
Who ſelleth hem ſo, may ſore agryſe
On our Lordes body I do not lye
I ſay ſoth thorowe trewe rede
His fleſſe and blod through his myſterye
Is there, in the forme of brede

¶How it is there, it nedeth not ſtryue
Whether it be ſubgette or accydent
But as Chriſte was, whan he was on lyue
So is he there verament
Yf pope or cardynall lyue good lyue
As Chriſt commaunded in his goſpell
Ayenſt that will I not ſtryue
But me thynketh they lyue not well

¶For if the pope lyued as god bede
Pryde and hyghneſſe he ſhulde diſpiſe
Rycheſſe, couetyſe, and crowne on hede
Wekenelle and pouerte he ſhulde vſe
The Gryffon ſaid he ſhuld abye
Thou ſhalbe brent in balefull fyre
And all thy ſecte I ſhall dyſtrye
Ye ſhall be hanged by the ſwyre

¶Ye ſhullen be hanged and to drawe
Who gyueth you leaue for to preache
Or ſpeke agaynſt goddes lawe
And the people thus falſely teache
Thou ſhalt be curſed with boke and bell
And diſſeuered from holy churche
And deme ydampned into hell
Otherwyſe but ye woll worche

¶The Pellycan ſayd that I ne drede
Your curſyng is of lyttel value
Of god I hope to haue my mede
For it is falſhed that ye ſhewe
For ye ben out of charite
And wylneth vengeaunce, as dyd Nero
To ſuffren I wol redy be
I drede not that thou canſt do

¶Chriſt bad ones ſuffre for his loue
And ſo he taught all his ſeruaunres
And but thou amende for his ſake aboue
I drede not al thy mayntenaunce
For if I drede the worldes hate
Me thynketh I were lytel to prayſe
I drede nothyng your hye eſtate
Ne I drede not your dyſeaſe

Wolde ye turne and leue your pryde
Your hye porte, and your richeſſe
Your curſyng ſhulde not go ſo wyde
God bringe you into tyghtwyſeneſſe
For I drede not your tiranny
For nothyng that ye can done
To ſuffre I am al redy
Syker I recke neuer howe ſoone

The Gryffon grynned as he were wood
And loked loucly as an owle
And ſwore by cokes hert bloode
He wolde him tere euery doule
Holy churche thou dyſclaundreſt foule
For thy reaſons I wol the al to rate
And make thy fleſche to rote and moule
Loſel, thou ſhalt haue harde grace

The Gryffon flewe forth on his waye
The Pellycane dyd ſyt and wepe
And to him ſelfe he gan ſaye
God wolde that any of Chriſtes ſhepe
Had herde, and ytake kepe
Eche a worde that here ſayd was
And wolde it write and wel it kepe
God wolde it were all for his grace

Plowman

I anſwerde, and ſayd I wolde
Yf for my trauayle any man wolde pey
Pellycan. He ſaid yes, theſe ꝑ god han ſolde
For they han ſtore of money
Plowman. I ſayd, tel me and thou maye
Why telleſt thou mens treſpace
Pellycan. He ſayd, to amende hem in good fay
Yf god wol gyue me any grace

For Christe him seke is lykened to me
That for hys people dyed on roode
As fare I, right so fareth he
He fedeth his birdes with his blode
But these done cyvll ayenst good
And ben his foue vnder frendes face
I tolde hem howe her lyuing stode
God amende hem for his grace

plowman. what ayleth ꝑ Griffon, tel why
That he holdeth on the other syde
For they two ben lykely
And with kyndes roben wyde
Pellicane. The foule betokeneth pryde
Is Lucifer, That high flewe was
And sith he dyd hym meuyll hyde
For he agylted goddes grace

As birde flyeth vp in the ayre
And syueth by byrdes that ben meke
So these ben flowe vp in to dispayre
And shenden sely soules eke
The soules that ben in sinnes seke
He calleth hem, knele therfore alas
For briby goddes forbode breke
God amende it for his grace

The hinder parte is a lyon
I robber and a rauyner
That robbeth the people in erth downe
And in erth holdeth none his pere
So fareth this foule both ferre and nere
And with ẽpoyel strength the people chase
As a lyon proude in erth here
God amende hem for his grace

Pellicane

He flewe forth with his winges twayne
Al droupyng, dased, and dul
But soone the griffon came agayne
Of his soules the earth was ful
The Pellicane he had caste to pul
So great a numbre neuer sene there was
What maner of soules tellen I wol
Yf god wol gyue me of his grace

With the griffon comen soules sele
Rauyns, rokes, crowes, and pye
Gray soules, agadred wele
I gurde aboue they wouldc bye
Gledes and bosardes weren hem by
White molles and puttockes token her place
And lapwinges, that wel cometh lye
This felowshyp han for gerde her grace

Long the Pellican was oute
But at last he commeth agayne
And brought with him the Phenix floute
The Griffon wold haue flow ful faine
His soules that flewen as thicke as rayne
The Phenix tho began hem chace
To flye from him it was in vayne
For he dyd vengeaunce and no grace

He slewe hem downe without mercy
There astarte neyther free ne thrall
On him they cast a rufull crye
When the Gryffon downe was fall
He bete him not, but slewe hem all
Whyther he hem droue no man may trace
Vnder the erth me thought they fall
Alas they had a feble grace

The Pellican then ared vyght
For my writyng if I haue blame
Who wol for me fyght of fyghte
Who shal shelde me from shame
He that had a mayde to dame
And the lambe that slayne was
Shal shelde me from goostly blame
For erthely harme is goddes grace

Therfore I pray euery man
Of my writyng haue me excused
This writing writeth the Pellican
That thus these people hath dyspysed
For I am freshe fully aduised
I nyl not mayntayne his manace
For the deuel is often disguysed
To bryng a man to yuell grace

Wyteth the Pellican and not me
For herof I nyl not auowe
In hye ne in lowe, ne in no degre
But as a fable take it ye mowe
To holy churche I wyll me bowe
Ech man to amende him Christe sende space
And for my writyng me alowe
He that is almighty for hys grace.

Here endeth the Plowmans tale, and here after foloweth the Parsons prologue.

By that the Ploweman had
his tale ended
The sonne fro the southe syde
is discended
So lowe, that it was nat to
my syght
Degrees of fyue and twenty on hight
Tenne at clocke it was, so as I gesse
For enleuen foote, a lytel more or lesse
My shadowe was at that tyme, as there
Of suche fete as my length parted were
In sixe fete equallye of proporcion
Therwith the moones exaltacion
I mene Libra, alway gan ascende
As we were entring at the thropes ende
For which our hoste, as he was wont to gye
Ye in this case, this holy companye
Sayd in this wyse, lordynges euerychone
Nowe lacketh vs no tale more than one
Fulfylled is my sentence and my decre
Who wol nowe tel a tale let se
Almoste fulfylled is my ordynaunce
I pray to god so yeue him right good chaunce
That telleth thys tale to vs lustely
Sir preest (qd he) arte thou a vicary
Or art thou a person, say soth by thy fay
Be what thou be, breke thou not our play
For euery man save thou, hath tolde his tale
Unbokell, & shewe vs what is in thy male
For trewely me thinketh by thy chere
Thou shuldest knit vp wel a great matere
Tel vs a fable anon, for cockes bones
¶ This person him answerde al at ones
Thou getest fable none tolde of me
For Poule, that writeth to Tymothe
Repreueth hem that wayuen soothfastnesse
And techeth fables, and suche wrecchednesse
Why shulde I sowe draffe out of my fyste
Whan I may sowe whete, if that my lyst
For whiche I saye, if that ye lust to here
Moralyte, and of vertuous matere
And than, yf ye wol yeue me audience
I wolde ful fayne at Christes reuerence
Done you pleasaunce leful, as I can
But trusteth wel, I am a sotherne man
I can not iestе, rum, ram, ruf, by letter
And god wote, rime holde I but litle better
And therfore if ye lyste, I wol not glose
I wol you tell a lytell tale in prose
To knit vp all this feest, and make an ende
And Jesu for hys grace, wit me sende
To shewe you the way, in thys voyage
Of thilke perfyte glorioufe pilgrimage
That hight Hierusalem celestiall
And if you vouchesaue, anon I shall
Begyn vpon my tale, for whiche I pray
Tel your aduyse, I can no better say
But natheleſſe this meditacion
I put it aye, vnder the correccion
Of clerkes, for I am not vertuell
I take but the sentence, trusteth well
Therfore I make protestacion
That I wol stande to correccion.
¶ Upon this worde, we haue assented soone
For as it semed, it was for to done
To ende in some vertuous sentence
And for to yeue him space and audience
And bade our hoste he shulde to him say
That al we, to tell his tale him pray
Our hoste had the wordes for vs all
Sir preest (qd he) nowe fayre mote you befall
Say that what ye lyste, & we shal gladly here
And with worde he sayde in this manere
Telleth (quod he) your meditacion
But hasteth you, the sonne wol adoun
Beth fructuous, and that in lytel space
And to do wel, god sende you his grace.

¶ Here endeth the Persons prologue, and hereafter folo-
weth hys tale.

¶ Jeremi. vi. State super vias, et videte, et interrogate de semitis antiquis, que sit via bona, et ambulate in ea: et inuenietis refrigerium animabus vestris.

Ur swete lord god of heuen, that no man wol perysche, but wol that we turne al to the knowlege of hym, and to the blisful lyfe that is perdurable, amonesseth vs by the prophete Jeremye, that saith in this wise. Stondeth vpon ꝑ wayes & seeth, and asketh of olde pathes: that is to saye, of olde sentences, whiche is the good waye, and walketh in that waye, and ye shal fynde refreshyng for your soules. &c. Many ben the wayes espirituelles that lede folke to our lorde Jesu Christ, and to the reigne of glorye: Of whiche wayes there is a ful noble waye, and full conuenable, whiche maye not fayle to man ne to woman, that through synne hath misgone fro the right way of Hie-
rusalem

rusalem celestyall: and this way is called penitence, of whiche man shulde gladlye herken and enquire with al his hert, to wete what is penitence, and whiche is called penitence, and howe many maners bene of actions or werkynges of penitence, and howe manye speces there ben of penitence, and which thynges apertayne and behoue to penitence, and which thynges dissourbe penitence.

Saint Ambrose sayth, that penitence is the playnynge of man for the gylte that he hathe done, and no more to do any thynge for which hym oughte to playne. And some doctours sayth, Penitence is the waymentynge of man that sorroweth for his synne, and payneth hym selfe, for he hath misdon. Penitence with certayne circumstaunces, is very repentaunce of a man that holte him selfe in sorowe, & other payne for his gyltes: and for he shall be very penitent, he shall first bewayle sinnes that he hath done, and stedfastlye purpose in his hert to haue shrifte of mouthe, & to do satisfactió, and neuer to do thyng, for whiche hym ought more bewayle or complayne, and contynewe in good workes: or els his repentaunce may not auayle. For as saint Isoder sayth. He is a traytor and a lyer, and no very repentaunt, that eftsone doth thyng, for whiche him ought repente. Wepynge and not for to stynte to do synne, maye not auayle: But natheless men shal hope that at euerye tyme that má falleth, be it neuer so ofte, that he may aryse through penaunce, yf he haue grace: but certayne it is great doute, for as saithe saynte Gregorye. Vnnethes aryseth he out of syn, that is chargyd with the charge of euell vsage. And therfore repentaunt folke, that stynt for to synne, and leue synne or synne leue thē, holy churche holdeth them syker of their saluacion. And he that synneth, and verely repenteth hym in his laste ende: holy churche yet hopeth his saluacion, by ỳ great mercy of our lord Jesu christ, for his repentaunce: but take the syker waye. ¶ And nowe syth I haue declared you, what thyng is Penitēce, nowe ye shal understonde, that there ben thre actions of penitence. The first is, that a man be baptised after that he hathe synned. Sayntе Austyn sayethe, but he be penytent for his olde synfull lyfe, he maye not begyn the newe clene lyfe: For certes if he be baptised without penitēce of his olde gilt, he retayneth ỳ marke of baptyme, but not the grace ne the remyssyon of hys synnes, tyll he haue very repentaunce. An other defaute is this, that men do deedly synne after that they haue receyued baptisme. The thirde defaute is this, that men fall in dewyll synnes after her baptisme, fro day to daye. Therof sayethe sayntе Augustyn, that penitence of good and humble folke, is the penitence of euery daye.

The speces of penitence benthre: That one of hem is solempne: an other is cómune, and the thirde is preuy. That penaūce that is solempne is in two maners: As to be put out of holye churche in lent, for slaughter of chyldren, and suche maner thynge. An other is when a man hath synned openlye, of whyche synne the fame is openly spoken in the countrye: and than holy churche by iudgement, distrayneth hym for to do open penaunce.

Cómen penaunce is, that prestes enioyne men in certayne case: as for to go perauenture naked in pilgrimage, or bare fote. Preuy penaunce is that, that men do al daye for preuy synnes, of whiche we shryue vs preuely, and receyue preuy penaunce. ¶ Now shalt thou understond, what is behoueful and necessary to very perfite penitence: and this stondeth in thre thynges. Contricion of herte, confession of mouthe, & satisfaccion. For whiche sayethe sayntе Johan Chrisostom, a contrite penitence distroyeth a man to accept benygnely euery payne, that hym is enioyned, with contricion of hert, and shrifte of mouthe, with satisfaction and in werkynge of al maner humilite. And this is fruitfull penitence ayenste thre thynges, in which we wratthe our lord Jesu Christ: that is to saye, by delyte in thynkynge, by recheleslesse in spekynge, & be wicked vnlefull werkyng. And ayenste these wicked gyltes is penitence, that may be lykened vnto a tre.

The rote of this tree is contricion, that bedeth hum in the hert of hum that is very repentaunt, right as the rote of the tre bydeth hum in the erthe. Of thys roote of contricion sprungeth a stalke, that bereth braunches and leues of confession, and fruite of satisfaccion. For which Christ sayth in his gospel. Doth digne fruite of penitēce, for by this fruite men may knowe the tre, and not by the rote that is hid in the herte of manne, ne by the braunches, ne the leues of confession. And therfore our lord Jesu Christ sayth thus: By the fruite of hem shal ye knowe hem. Of this roote also sprungeth a sede of grace, the which sede is mother of al sykernesse, and this sede is eiger & hote

The

The grace of this lede spiȝeth of god thru gd remembraunce on the daye of dome, and on the paynes of hell. Of thys mater sauthe Salomon, that in the drede of god, man forleteth hys synne. The heate of this lede is the loue of god, and ꝑ desyring of the ioy perdurable: This heate drawe̅th the hert of man to God, and doth him hate his synne: For sothly there is nothyng that sauoureth so wel to a chylde, as the mylke of his nourrye, ne nothyng is to him more abhomynable than ꝑ mylke, whan it is medled with other meate. Right so the synful man that loueth his synne, him semeth that it is to him most swete of any thing, but fro that time he loweth tadly oure lorde Jesu Christ, and desyreth the lyfe perdurable, ther is to him no thynge more abhomynable: For sothly the law of God is the loue of god. For whyche Dauid the prophete saithe: I haue loued thy lawe, & hated wyckednesse: he that loueth god, kepeth his law and his worde.

¶ This tree sawe the prophete Daniel in spirite, on the vision of Nabugodonosor, whan he counsayled him to do penitence. Penaunce is the tree of lyfe, to hem that it receyue, and he that holdeth hi in very penitence is blessed after the sentence of Salomon. In this penytence or contrycion, man shall vnderstonde foure thinges, that is to say: What is contrycyon, and whiche ben the causes that moue a man to contricion, and how he shulde be contryte, and what contrycyon auayleth to the soule. Than is it thus, that contrycion is the very sorowe, that a man receyueth in his hert for his synnes, wyth sadde purpose to shryue him, and to do penaũce, and neuer more to do synne: And this sorowe shal be in this maner, as sayth sayntc Bernarde: It shall be heuye and greuous, and full sharpe and poynaunte in herte. ¶ Fyrste, for a man hathe agilted hys lorde and his creatoure, and more sharpe and poynaunt, for he hathe agilted his father celestyal: And yet more sharpe & poynaunt, for he hath wrathed and agilted him that bought him, that with his precious bloode hath deliuered vs fro the bondes of synne, and fro the crueltc of the dyuel, & fro the paynes of hell.

The causes that ought moue a man to contriction bene fyue. First a man shall remembre him of his synnes, but loke that that remembraunce ne be to hym no delyte, by no waye, but greate shame and sorowe for hys synnes. For Job saith, sinful men done workes worthy of confession. And therefore sayth Ezechiell: I wol remembre me al the yeres of my lyfe, in the bitternesse of my herte. And god sayth in the Apocalipse: Remembre ye from whence that ye ben fall, for before that tyme that ye sinned, ye were children of god, and limmes of the reigne of god: But for your synne ye ben waxen thrall and foule, & membres of the fende: hate of angels, slaunder of holye churche, and foode of the false serpent, perpetuall matere of the fyre of hell: And yet more foule and abhominable, for ye trespace so oft tymes, as dothe an houndc ꝑ returneth ayen to eete his owne spwing: & yet be ye fouler, for your longe continuing in synne, & your sinfull vsage, for whiche ye be rotted in your synne, as a beeste in his donge. Suche manr of thoughtes make a man to haue shame of his synne, and no delyte. As god sayth, by the prophete Ezechiel: Ye shall remembre your owne wayes, & they shull displese you sothely. Synnes ben the wayes that lede folke to hel.

The seconde cause that oughte make a man to haue disdayne of synne is this, that as sayth sayntc Peter: Who so doth sin, is thrall of synne, and synne putteth a man in great thraldome. And therefore sayth the prophete Ezechiell: I went sorowful, in disdayne of my selfe. Certes well ought a man haue disdayne of synne, and withdraw̅e him fro that thraldome and vilany. And to what sayth Seneke in thys mater, he sayth thus: Though I wiste, that neither god ne manne shulde neuer knowe it, yet wolde I haue disdayne for to do sinne. And the same Seneke also sayth: I am borne to greater thynge, than to be thral to my body, or for to make of my body a thrall. Ne a fouler thrall maỹ ne man ne woman make of his bodye, than for to yeue his body to synne, all were it the foulest churle, or the foulest woman that lyueth, and leste of value, yet is he than more foule, and more in seruitude. Euer fro the hyther degre that man falleth, the more is he thrall, and more to god and to the worlde vyle and abhominable. O good god, wel ought man haue greate disdayne of sinne, sith ꝑ through sinne, there he was fre he is made bonde. And therefore sayth the sayntc Austyn: If thou hast disdayne of thy seruaunt, if he offende or synne, haue thou than disdayne that thou thy selfe shuldest do sinne. Take rewarde of thyn owne

owne balewe, that thou ne be to foule to thy selfe. Alas well ought they than haue disdayne to be seruauntes and thralles to sinne, and sore to be ashamed of the selfe, that god of his endeles goodnesse hathe sette in hyghe estate, or yeue hem witte, strength of bodye, heale, beautie, or prosperite, and bought hem fro the deth with his hert blode, that they so vnkyndlye, ayenst hys gentilnesse, quite hym so vilarnously, to slaughter of her owne soules. O good god, ye women ꝑ ben of great beautie, remembreth you on the prouerbe of Salomon. He sayethe he lykneth a faire woman, that is a foole of her bodye, to a ring of golde ꝑ were worne on the groyne of a sowe: For right as a sowe wroteth in euery ordure so wroteth she her beaute in stinkyng ordure of synne.

The thirde cause ꝑ ought meue a man to contrition, is drede of the daye of dome, & of the horrible paynes of hell. For as sayne Jerom sayethe: At euery tyme that me remembreth of the daye of dome, I quake: for when I ete and drinke, or what so that I do, euer semeth me that ꝑ trompe sowneth in myn eere: Ryseth ye vp that ben deed, and cometh to the iugement. O good god, muche ought a man to drede such a iugemẽt, ther as we shal be all, as sayne Poule sayethe, before the sete of our lorde Jesu Christ, where as he shal make a generall congregacion, where as no man may be absent, for certes there auayleth none essoyne ne excusacion, and not only that our defautes shalbe iuged, but also that al our werkes shall openly be knowen. And as sayth saint Barnarde, there ne shal no pledyng auayle, ne no sleight: We shall yeue reknynge, of euery idle worde. There shall we haue a iuge that may not be disceyued ne corrupt, and why? For certes, al our thoughtes ben discouered, as to him, ne for prayer ne for mede, he shall not be corrupte. And therfore sayth Salomon: The wrathe of god ne woll not spare no wight, for prayer ne for yefte. And therefore at the day of dome, there is no bote to escape. Wherefore, as saith saint Anselm: ful great anguisshe shal ꝑ sinneful folke haue at that tyme: There shall the fiers and wrothe iuge sytte aboue, and vnder hym the horrible pytte of hel open, to distroy him that wel knowe, his synnes, whiche synnes openly bẽ shewed before god and before euery creature: And on the left syde, mo diuels than any herte may thynke, for to hale & drawe ꝑ synfull soules to the payne of hell, & within in the hertes of folke shall be the sterynge of conscience, and without forth shal be the worlde all brenning: whither shall than the wretched sinful man flye to hyde hym? Certes he may not hyde him, he must come forth and shewe him. For certes, as saith saint Jerom, the erth shal cast him out of it & the see also, & the ayre that shal be full of thonder clappes & lightninges. Now sothly, who so wel remembreth him of these thinges: I gesse that his synne shall not turne hym in delyte, but to great sorowe, for drede of the payne of hell. And therfore sayth Job to god: suffre lorde, that I may a while bewayle & wepe, er I go withoute returning to the derke londe, couered with the derkenesse of dethe, to the londe of misese & of derkenesse, where as is ꝑ shadow of deth, where as there is non order or ordinaunce, but ferefull drede that euer shal last. Lo, here may ye se, that Job prayed respyte a while, to bewepe and wayle hys trespase: for sothely one day of respite is better than al ꝑ tresour of this worlde. And for as muche as a man may acquite himselfe before god by penitence in this worlde, and not by tresour, therfore shulde he pray to god to yeue him respite a while, to bewepe & wayle his trespace: For certes, al the sorowe that a manne myght make fro the begynnyng of the worlde, nys but a lytel thing, at regard of the sorowe of hell. The cause why that Job calleth hell the londe of derkenesse, vnderstondeth that he calleth it londe or erth, for it is stable and neuer shall fayle, & derke: for he that is in hell hath defaute of lyght materiall, for certes the derke light that shal come out of the fire that euer shall brẽne, shal turne him al to payne that is in hell, for it sheweth him to the horrible deuels that him turmenteth, couered with the derkenesse of deth, that is to say, that he that is in hell, shall haue defaute of the sight of god: for certes the syght of god is the lyfe perdurable. The derkenesse of dethe, ben ꝑ sinnes that the wretched man hath done, whiche that disturbe him to se the face of god, right as the derke cloude betwixt vs & the sunne. Londe of misese, bycause that there ben thre maner of defautes ayenst thre thinges that folke of this worlde haue in this present lyfe, that is to saye: honours, delices, and richesse. Ayenst honour haue they in hell shame

shame and confusion: for well ye wote, that men call honour the reuerence that man doth to man, but in hell is non honour ne reuerence. For certes, no more reuerence shalbe don ther to a king, than to a knaue. For whiche god saith by the prophet Jeremy: Those folke that me dispise, shall be in dispyte. Honoure is also called gret lordship: there shal no wight serue other, but of harme & turment. Honoure is also called great dignite & highnesse, but in hell shal they be all fortroden of diuelles. As god sayth: the horrible dyuels shall go and come vpon the bodies of dampned folke: and this is, for as much as the higher þ they were in this present life, the more shal they be abated & defoyled in hell. Ayenste the richesse of this world shall they haue misese of pouerte, that shal be in foure thynges. In defaute of tresoure, of whiche Dauid sayth: The riche folke that embrace & knite all her herte to tresour of this worlde, shal slepe in the slepynge of dethe, and nothynge ne shall they fynde in her hondes of all her tresour. And more ouer the misese of hell shal be in defaute of mete and drinke. For god sayth thus by Moyses: They shall be wasted with honger, & the bridges of hell shal deuour hem, with bitter deth, and the gal of the dragon shal be her drinke, and the venym of the dragon her morsels. Also her misese shal be in defaute of clothing, for they shal be naked in body, as of clothing, saue the fire in whiche they brenne, and other filthes: & naked shall they be of soule, of all manere vertues, which þ is the clothing of the soule. Ye here ben then the gay robes, the soft sheres, & the smal sheres? Lo, what saith god of hem by the prophet Isaye, that vnder hem shal be strawed mouldres, & her couertures shall be of wormes of hell. Also her misese shalbe in defaute of frendes, for he is not pore that hath good frendes, but ther is no frende, for neither god ne no creature shall be frende to hem, & eche of hem shal hate other vn to deth hate: The sonnes & the doughters shal rebell ayenst father & mother, & vnkynd ayenst kynred, chyde & despise eche other, bothe day and night, as god saith by the prophet Micheas: And the louynge children þ whylom loued so fleshly eche other, wold eche of hem ete other if they myght. For howe shulde they loue together in the peynes of hell, whan they hated eche other in prosperite of this life? for truste wel, her fleshly loue was deedly hate. As sayth the prophete Dauyd: Who so þ loueth wicked nesse, he hateth his soule, & who so hateth his owne soule, certes he may loue none other wight in no maner: And therfore in hell is no solace ne no frendshyp, but euer þ more lyerdes that ben in hell, the more cursinges, the more chydinges, and the more deedly hate there is amonge hem. Also they shall haue defaute of al manere delices, for certes delices ben after the appetites of þ fyue wittes: as sight, herynge, smellinge, sauouringe, and touchinge. But in hell her sighte shall be full of derkenesse & of smoke, and therfore full of teres, and her herynge ful of waylyng and gryntynge of teth: As sayth Jesu Christ. Her nosethirles shal be ful of stynkyng. And, as sayth Isaye the prophete: her sauouring shal be full of bitter gall, and as touchinge of all her bodyes, yclothed with fire, that neuer shal quenche, & with wormes that neuer shall dye. As god sayth by the mouth of Isaye: and lo, as much as they shal not wene that they may dye for payne, and by deth fle fro payne, may they vnderstonde in the wordes of Job, that sayth: There is the shadowe of deth. Certes a shadowe hath likenesse of the thyng of which it is shadowed, but shadowe is not the same thyng of which it is shadowed: right so fareth the payne of hell, it is like deth, for the horrible anguisse. And lo, why? for it pereth hem euer as though they shulde dye anon: but certes they shal not die. For as sayth seint Gregorie, to wrecched caytifes shalbe deth without deth, & ende without ende, & defaute vn to outrage, for her deth shal alwaye lyue, & her end shal euer more begin, & her defaute shal not fayle.

And therfore sayth sayntе Johan the Euangelist, they shal folowe deth, & they shal not finde hem, and they shal desire to dye, & deth shal fle from hem. And also Job sayth, that in hell is no order of rule. And all be it so, that god hath create al thinge in right order, & nothinge without order, but all thynges ben ordeyned & numbred, yet nathelesse they that ben dampned ben nothyng in order, ne holde non order, for the erthe ne shal bere hem no fruyt, for as the prophete Dauid sayth: God shal destroye the fruyte of the erth, as for hem, the water ne shall yeue hem no moysture, ne the eyre no refreshynge, ne fire no lyght. For as sayth sayntе Basilie: The brennynge of the fire of this worlde shall god yeue in hell to hem that ben dampned, but the light & þ clerenesse

shall

shal be yeue in heuen to his children: right as good men yeue flesshe to her children, & bones to her houndes. And for they shall haue none hope to escape, saith sayntē Job at laste, that there shal ernout and gresly drede dwell without ende. Horrour is alway drede that is to come, and this drede shal alwaye dwel in the hertes of hem that be dampned. And therfore haue they loste al her hope for seuen causes. First for god that is her iuge shal be without mercy to hem, and they may not please him ne none of his saintes, ne they may not yeue no thing for her raunsome, ne they shall haue no boyce to speke to him, ne they may not fle fro payne, ne they haue no goodnesse in hem that they may shewe to delyuer hem fro payne. And therfore saythe Salomon: The wycked man dyeth, and whan he is deed, he shal haue no hope to escape fro payne. Who so than wold wel vnderstonde the paines, & bethynke him well that he hath deserued those paynes for his synnes, certes he shulde haue more talent to syghe and wepe, than for to synge and playe. For as sayth Salomon, who so that had the science to knowe the paynes that ben ordayned for synne, he wolde make sorowe. That sorowe, as sayth sayntē Austyn, maketh a man to wepe with in his herte.

The fourth poynte that ought to make a man haue contrycion is the sorowfull remembraunce of the good that he hath lefte to be here in earthe, and also the good that he hath lefte. Certes the good werkes of hem that haue the grace to dye in parfyt charite, ben al mortified by the holy goost, as sayth sayntē Austyn, of whom the soule departeth fro the body in suche wyse that it deserueth neuer to come in to the presence of god. Also the goodnesse of grace that they had in this lyf is mortified by the synne that they do after, & also the good that their frendes do for hem after their deth is mortified from hem. Certes the almesse that is done for hem is mortified as fro hem self, but it is not mortified as fro hem that yeuen it. Also the prayer of holy chirche & of good men for hem is mortified as fro hem self, but it is not mortified as fro hem that yeuen it. Also the deuocyons that men do for hem in holy chirche, or in pylgrymages, or elles where, is mortified as fro hem self, but it is not mortified as fro hem that yeuen it. Also the fastynges that her frendes do for hem is mortified as fro hem self, but it is not mortified as fro hem that yeuen it. Also the almesse that her frendes do for hem is mortified as fro hem self, but it is not mortified as fro hem that yeuen it. Also the prayer of holy chirche & of good men for hem is mortified as fro hem self, but it is not mortified as fro hem that yeuen it. Also the deuocyons that men do for hem in holy chirche, or in pylgrymages, or elles where, is mortified as fro hem self, but it is not mortified as fro hem that yeuen it. Also the fastynges that her frendes do for hem is mortified as fro hem self, but it is not mortified as fro hem that yeuen it.

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The fyfth thinge that ought te moue a man to contrycyon, is remembraunce of the passion that our lorde Jesu Christe suffred for our synnes. For as saithe saynt Bernarde, whyle that I lyue I shall haue remembraunce of the trauayles that our lorde Jesu Christ suffred in prechynge, hys werynesse in trauayling, his temptacions whan he fasted, his longe wakynges whan he praied, his teres whan that he wepte for pety of good people, the wo, the shame, and the fylth that men sayde to him: of the foule spyttyng that men spyt in his face, of the buffettes that mē yaue hym: of the foule mowes and of the reproues that men said to him: of the nayles, with whiche he was nayled to the crosse, and of all the remnaunt of hys passyon that he suffred for my synnes, & no thinge for his gylte. And ye shall vnderstande, that in mans synne is euery maner ordre or ordynaunce turned vp so downe. For it is sothe, that God, reason, sensualyte, and the bodye of man, bene ordayned that eche of these foure thynges should haue lordshyp ouer that other: as thus. God shulde haue lordshyp ouer reson, and reson ouer sensualyte, and sensualyte ouer the body of man. But sothly whan man synneth, all thys ordre or ordynaūce is turned vp so down. And therfore thā, for as moche as reson of man ne wol not be subiect ne obeysaunt to god, that is his lord by right, therfore leseth it ꝑ lordshyp that it shulde haue ouer sensualyte, and also ouer the body of man. And why? for sensualyte rebelleth than ayenst reson: and by that way leseth reson the lordshyp ouer sensualyte & ouer the body: for ryght as reson is rebell to god, right so is bothe sensualite rebel to reson & to the body also. And certes this disordinaūce & this rebellyon our lorde Jesu Christe bought vpon his precyous body ful dere: & herkeneth in what wise. For as moche than as reason is rebel to god, therfore is man worthy to haue sorow & to be deed. This suffred our lord Jesu Christ for man, after ꝑ he had be betrayed of his disciple, & distrayned & bounde, so that his blode brast out at euery nayle of his hondes, as saith saint Justyn. And ferthermore, for as moche as reson of man wol not daunt sensualyte, whan it may, therfore is man worthy to haue shame: & this suffred our lord Jesu Christ for man, whan they spyt in his visage. And ferthermore, for as moche thā as the caytyfe body of man is rebel bothe to reson & to sensualyte, therefore it is worthy deth, & this suffred our lorde Jesu Christ vpon the crosse, where as there was no parte of his body free without great payne & bytter passyon: and al this suffred our lorde Jesu Christe that neuer forfaited. And therfore resonably may be said of Jesu in this maner: To moche am I pyned for thinges that I neuer deserued, and to moch defouled for shame that man is worthy to haue: And therfore may ꝑ synful man well say, as saith saint Bernarde. Accursed be the bytternesse of my synne, for which there must be suffred so moch bytternes. For certes after the diuers discordāce of our wickidnes, was the passion of Jesu Christ ordained in diuers thinges: as thus. Certes synfull mans soule is betrayed of the deuel by couetyse of temporell prosperite, & scorned by disceite whā that he chaseth fleshly delyces, and yet it is turmented by impacience of aduersite, & despyt by seruage & subiection of synne, & at the laste is slayne fynally. For this disordynaunce of synfull man was Jesu Christ first betrayed, & after ꝑ was he bounde, that came for to vnbynde vs of synne & of payne. Than was he despised, ꝑ only shulde haue be honoured in al thynges. Thā was his visage ꝑ ought be desired to be seue of all mankynde, in whyche visage angels desyre to loke, vilaynesly despyt. Thā was he scourged that nothyng had trespased, and fynallye than was he crucifyed & slayne. Than was acōplished the wordes of Jsaye: He was woūded for our mysdedes, & defouled for our felonyes. Now syth that Jesu Christ toke on him the payn of al our wickednesses, moch ought synfull man wepe and bewayle, that for his synnes goddes sone of heuē shuld al this payne endure.

The syxte thynge ꝑ shulde meue a man to contrition, is the hope of three thynges, that is to say: forgyuenesse of synne, and the yeft of grace for to do well, & the glorye of heuen, with which god shal rewarde man for his good dedes: And for as moche as Jesu christ yeueth vs these yeftes of his largenesse and of his soueraine boūte, therfore is he called Jesus Nazarenus rex Judeorū) Jesus is to say, saui our or saluacion, on whom meane shal hope to haue forgyuenesse of synnes, which that is properly saluacion of synnes. And therfore said the angell to Joseph, thou shalte cal his name Jesus, that shal saue his people

of her

of her synnes. And herof saithe saynte Peter: There is none other name vnder heauen that is yeue to any man, by whiche a man may be saued, but onely Jesus. Nazarenus is as mo the for to saye, as flourishynge, in whyche a man shall hope that he that yeueth hym remis syon of synnes, shall yeue him also grace well for to do. I was at the dore of thyn hert sayth Jesus, & called for to enter: he that openeth to me shall haue forgyuenes of hys synne. I wol entre in to him by my grace, & suppe with him by the good werkes ỳ he shall do, which werkes bene the foode of ỳ soule, & he shall suppe with me, by ỳ great ioy that I shal yeue him. Thus shall man hope for hys werkes of penaunce, that god shal yeue him his reigne, as he behyght him in the gospel. Nowe shall a man vnderstande in whiche maner shal be his contrycion: I saye that it shall be vnyuersall and totall, this is to say: a man shall be verry repentaunt for all his synnes that he hath done in delite of his thought, for it is right perillous. For there bene two maner of consentynges, that one of hem is called consentyng of affection, whan a man is moued to do synne, and than delyteth him longe for to thynke on that synne, and his reason appercieueth wel that it is synne ayenst the lawe of god, and yet his reason traynyeth not hys foule delyte to a lenge, though he se wel apertly that it is ayenst the reuerence of god, al thoughe his reason ne consente not to do that synne in dede, yet saye some doctours that such delite that dwelleth longe is ful perillous, all be it neuer so lytell. And also a man shulde sorowe, namelye for al that euer he hath desyred ayenst the law of god, with perfyte consenting of his reson, for therof is no doute that it is deedly synne in consenting: for certes there is no deedly synne but that it is first in mans thought, and after that in his delyte, and so forthe in to consentyng and in to dede. Wherfore I say ỳ many men ne repent hem neuer of suche thoughtes and delyces, ne neuer shriue hem of it, but only of the dede of great synnes outward: wherfore I saye that suche wicked delites ben subtyl begylers of hem that shall be dampned.

Fore ouer, man ought to sorowe for his wicked wordes as wel as for his wycked dedes: for certes the repentaunce of a synguler synne, and not repentaunt of al his other synnes, or els repent him of al his other synnes, and not of a synguler synne, may not auayle: for certes god almighty is al good, and therfore eyther he forgeueth al, or els right nought. And therfore saithe sayute Augustyn: I wote certaynly that god is enemy to euery synner: and howe than he that obserueth one synne, shall he haue forgyuenesse of those other synnes? Nay. And more ouer contrycion shulde be wonder sorowful and anguyshous and therfore yeueth him god playnly his mercy: And therfore whan my soule was anguyshed and sorowful within me, than had I remembraunce of god, that my prayer myght come to him. Furthermore, contrycion must be contynuall, and that man haue stedfast purpose to shryue him and to amende him of hys lyfe. For soothly whyle contrycion lasteth, man may euer hope to haue forgyuenes. And of this cometh hate of synne, that destroyeth bothe synne within him selfe, and also in other folke al his power. For whyche saythe Dauid: They that loue god hate wickednesse; for to loue god is for to loue that he loueth, and hate that he hateth. The laste thynge that men shall vnderstonde is this, wherefore auayleth contrycion. I say ỳ contrycion sometyme delyuereth man fro synne: Of which Dauid saith, I sayd saith Dauid I purposed formely to shriue me and thou lorde releyddest my synne. And right so as contrycion auayleth not without sad purpose of shrifte if man haue opportunite and may so lyue: wel worthe it shrifte or satysfaccion with oute contrycion. And more ouer contrycion distroyeth the prison of hell, & maketh weake and feable al the stregthes of the deuels, and restoreth the vertues of the holy goste and of al good vertues, and it cleanseth ỳ soule of synne and delyuereth it fro the payne of hell, & fro the company of the deuel, and fro the seruage of synne, and restoreth it to all goodes spirituels, and to the company and communyon of holy church. Furthermore it maketh him that whylom was sonne of yre, to be the sonne of grace: And al these thinges ben proued by holy writte. And therfore he that wolde set his entent to these thinges he were ful wise, for truly he ne shulde haue than in al his lyfe corage to synne, but yeue his herte and body to serue Christ, and thereof do him homage. For truly our lorde hath spared vs so mekely in our folyes, that if he ne had pyte of mannes soule, & soyy longe might we all synge.

¶ Explicit prima pars penitentie:
et incipit pars secunda.

The seconde parte of penitence is confessyon, that is signe of contricion. Nowe shul ye vnderstōd what is confessyon, and yf it ought nedes be don or no, & which thinges be couenable to very cōfessiō. First shalt ꝯ vnderstonde, ꝑ cōfession is very shewing of synnes to ꝑ preest: this is to say very, for he muste confesse him of all the condycions that belonge to his synne, as ferforth as he can: all must be sayd, and nothynge excused ne hyd, and not auaunt the of thy good werkes. Also it is necessatye to vnderstonde whence that sinnes spryng, & how they entre, and whiche they ben. Of the springynge of synnes sayth saynt Poule in this wyse: that right as by one man synne entred fyrste in to this worlde, and throughe sinne deth, right so the dethe entreth into all men that synne, and this man was Adam, by whom synne entred in to this worlde, whan he brake the cōmaundement of god. And therfore he that first was so mighty ꝑ he ne shuld haue dyed, became so that he muste nedes dye whether he wolde or no, & all his progenye in thys worlde ꝑ in the sayd man sinned. Loke that in the state of innocencie, whan Adam and Eue were naked in paradyse, & shamed not therof, howe the serpēt wyliest of al other beestes that god made, sayd to the woman: Ye by cōmaūded god you that ye shuld not ete of euery tre in paradise? The woman answerd: Of the fruite sayd she of trees of paradyse we feede vs, but of the fruite of the myddle tree of paradise god forbode vs to ete and touche, lest we shulde die. The serpent sayd to the woman: Nay nay, ye shal not dye of dethe, for forthe god wote that what day that ye ete therof your eyen shal open, & ye shall be as goddes knowyng good & harme. The woman than sawe that the tree was good to fedynge, & fayre to the eyen, & delectable to syght, she toke of the fruyte of the tre and ete, & yaue to her husbond, and he ete, and anon the eyen of hem bothe opened: And whan that they knew that they were naked: they sowed of fygge leues i maner of breches to hyde her membres. There maye ye se that deedly synne hath first suggestion of the fende as sheweth here by ꝑ adder, & afterward the delyte of the flesshe, as sheweth by Eue, & after that consentyng of reson, as sheweth here by Adam. For trust wel though so it were that the fende tempted Eue, that is to say ꝑ flesh, and the flesshe had delyte in the beutye of the fruite defended, yet certes til that reason, that is to say Adam, consented to the ertyng of the fruite, yet stode he in the state of innocēcie. Of the said Adam toke we the said originall synne, for of him fleshly dyscended be we all, and engendred of vyle and corrupte matiere: And whan the soule is put in our bodyes, ryght anon is contracte originall synne, and that that was erst but onely payne of concupiscence is afterwarde bothe payne and synne, & therfore we ben all borne sonnes of wrathe and of dampnation perdurable, yf it were baptyme ꝑ we receyue, which benymmeth vs the corse but forsothe the fyre dwelleth with vs as in temptacion, wherth fyre bryght Concupiscēce. This cōcupiscence whan it is wronfully disposed or ordayned in man, it maketh him to eyte by couetise of flesshe fleshely synne by syght of his eyen, as to erthly thynges, & also couetyse of hyghnesse by pride of hert.

Nowe as to speke of the fyrste couetyse that is concupiscence, after the lawe of oure membres that were laufully made, and by ryghtfull iugement of god, I saye, for as moche as man is not obeyssaunt to god that is his lord, therfore is the flesshe to him disobeyssāt through concupiscence, wherche is called norisshynge of synne, and occasion of synne. Therfore all the whyle that a man hath within him ꝑ fyre of cōcupiscence, it is impossyble but he be tempted somtime and moued in his flesshe to synne. And this thinge maye not fayle as long as he liueth. It maye well were feble by vertue of baptyme and by the grace of god through penitence, but fully ne shall it neuer quenche that he ne shal sōtyme be moued in him selfe, but if he were all restrayned by sickenesse or by maiyce of sorcery or colde drinkes. For lo, what sayth saint Poule: the flesshe coueteth ayenste the spirite, and the spirite agaynst the flesshe: they bene so contrary & so stryuen: that a man maye nat alway do as he wolde. The same sayne Poule, after his great penaunce, in water and in londe: in water by nyght & by day, in great perill and in great payne. In lond, fayne and thurst, colde and clothles, and ones stoned almoste to dethe. Yet sayde he alas, I caytife man, who shall delyuer me fro the pri-

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fyne of my caytife bodye. And sayne Jerom, whan he longe tyme had dwelled in desette, where as he hadde no company but of wylde beestes, wher as he had no meate but herbes and water to drinke, ne no bedde but the naked erthe, wherfore his flesshe was blacke as and Ethiopien for hete, and nye distroyed for colde. Yet saide he that the brennynge of lechery boyled in al his body. Wherfore I wot well that they be disceyued that saye, they be nat tempted in her bodyes. Ytimes sayne James that saith, that euery wight is tempted in his own cōscience, that is to say: ỳ eche of vs hath mater & occasion to be tempted of ỳ norissyng of syn that is in his body. And therfore saith saint John the euangelyst: yf we say that we ben without synne we disceiue our selfe, & truthe is nat in vs. Now shal ye vnderstonde how syn wexeth & encreseth i man. The fyrst thyng is the same norissyng of syn, of which I spake before, the fleshly concupiscence, and after that cometh suggestion of the deuil, this is to say the deuyls belous, wt which he bloweth in man the fire of cōcupiscence, and after that a man bethinketh hi whether he wol do or no, that thynge to whiche he is tempted. And than if a man withstōde & weyue ỳ firste enstyng of his flesshe & of the fende, than it is no syn, & if so be he do not, than feleth he anon a flame of delyte, & than it is good to bewarre and kepe him wel, or els he wol fal anon to cōsenting of syn, & than woll he do it, yf he may haue tyme and place. And of this mater sayth Moyses by the deuyl, in this maner: the fende saythe, I woll chace & pursue man by wicked suggestion, & I wol take him by mouing and steryng of syn, and I wol departe my prise of my praye by delyberation, & my luste shall be accōplysshed in delyte, I wol draw my swerd in consentynge. For certes, ryght as a swerde departeth a thing in two peces, right so cōsenting departeth god fro man, & than wol I sle him with my honde in dede of syn: thus sayth the fende. For certes, than is a man al deed in soule, & thus is synne accōplysshed with tēptation, by delyte & consētyng: & than is the sinne actuell. Forsoth syn is in two maners, eyther it is venyall or deedlye synne. Sothlye whan man loueth any creature more thā Jesu christ our creatour, than it is deedly synne, & venyall synne it is, yf man loue Jesu Chryste lesse than him ought. Forsothe the dede of thys venyall synne is ful perylous, for it mynisheth the loue that man shulde haue to God more & more. And therfore if a man charge hym selfe with many suche venyall synnes: certes but if so be that he sōtyme discharge him of hem by shrifte, They maye full lyghtlye mynysshe in him all the loue that he hath to Jesu Christ, & in this wise skyppeth venial syn into deedly sin. For certes, the more that a man chargeth his soule with venyall synnes, the more he is enclyned to fall into deedlye synne. And therfore lette vs not be negligente to charge vs of venyal synnes. For the proverbe saith, that many small make a greate. Herken this ensample. A great waue of the see cometh sometyme with so great a violence, that it drowneth the shyppe. And the same harme doth sometyme the small dropes of water that entreth through a lytell crevers, into ỳ shyppe and in to the botome of the shyppe, yf men be so negligente that they discharge hem not by tymes. And therfore all though there be a difference betwixt these two causes of drowning, algates the shyppe is drowned. Lykewise falleth it sometyme of deedly synne and of anoyous venyall synnes, whan they multyplye in man so greatlye, that those worldly thynges that he loueth, through which he synneth venyally, is as great in his hert as the loue of god, or more: and therfore the loue of euery thyng that is not beset in god, ne done principally for Goddes sake, al thoughe that a man loue it lesse than God, yet is it venyall synne, and deedly synne whan the loue of any thyng weyeth in ỳ hert of man, as muche as the loue of God or more. Deedly synne as saith sayne Austyn, is whan a man turneth his herte fro God, which ỳ is very soueravne bounte that may not chaunge, & yeueth his herte to thing that may chaunge & flytte: and certes that is euery thig saue god of heuen. For soth is that yf a man yeue his loue, whiche that he oweth to god with all his hert, vnto a creature, certes as moch of loue as he yeueth to that same creature, so moch he bereueth fro god, & therfore dothe he synne: For he that is detteour to god ne yeldeth not to god all his dette, ỳ is to say, all the loue of his herte. Nowe sythe man vnderstōdeth generally which is venyall syn, than it is conenable to tell specyally of synne, which that many a man peraventure demeth hem no sinnes, & shryueth him not of the same thynges, & yet nathelesse they be sinnes sothly as these clerkes write, this is to say: In euery

time ꝑ manereth or drinketh more than suffyseth to ꝑ sustenaunce of his body, in certain he doth synne: and also whan he speketh more than it nedeth, it is synne. Also whan he herkeneth not benignely the complaint of ꝑ poure: Also whan he is in heale of body and wol not faste whan other folke fast, without cause reasonable: also whan he slepeth more than nedeth, or whan he cometh perchaunce to late to churche, or to other werkes of charite: Also whan he vseth his wife without soverain desyre of engendrure to the honour of god, or for the entent to yelde to his wife det of his body. Also whan he wol not visyte the syke or the prisoner, yf he may. Also yf he love wyf or childe or other worldly thinge more than reson requireth. Also if he flatter or blandyse more than him ought for any necessite. Also yf he withdrawe ꝑ almesse of the poore. Also if he apparaile his body more curiously than nedeth is, or ete or drinke daintely or inordinately. Also if he rise untymes at churche or at goddes service, or that he be a talker of vdle wordes of folye or vilany, for he shall yelde accompts of it at the dredful dome. Also whan he be bisy in werkes of almesse to do thinges that he may not performe. Also whan that he by lightnesse or folye mysseyth or sclaundreth his neyghbour. Also whan he hath any wicked suspection of thinge that he se not wote of for blasfemie. These thinges and mo without nombre be synnes, as saith saint Austyn. Nedeful thinge is that every man understonde that al be it so ꝑ non erthly man may eschue al venial synnes, yet ought he to restrayne him by the brennyng love that he hath to our lorde Jesu Christ, and by prayers and confession and other good workes, so that it shall be but litel grete. For as saith saint Augustyn. If a man love god in such maner that al that ever he dothe is the love of god, or for ꝑ love of God be it ryght, for he thinketh in the love of godlyke how more that one droppe of water, whiche doth fall into a greate fournays full of fyre annoyeth or greveth the brennyng of the fyre in lyke maner annoyeth or greveth a venyall synne unto that man whiche is stedfaste and perfyte in the love of our savyour Jesu Christe. Furthermore men may also restrayne and put away venyall synne, by communyng and receyving worthely the body of our saviour Jesu Christe. Also by takynge of holy water, by almesse dede, by generall confession of confiteor at masse, and at Complyn, and by blessynges of bisshopes ꝑ prestes, and by other good workes.

¶ De septem peccatis mortalibus, et de eorum dependentiis circumstantiis, et speciebus.

Nowe it is expedyente to tell, whiche bene the seuen deedly synnes, that is to saye, chefe trayns of synnes. Al they renne in oldes, but in dyuers maners.

Now ben they called seuen Capes, for as moche as they be chefe, and spring of al other synnes. Of the roote of these seuen synnes, than is Pryde the generall rote of all harmes. For of this rote springeth certayne braūches: as Ire, Envye, Accidie or slouthe, Auarice, couetise, to common understondynge glotony and lecherye: And eche of these chefe synnes have her braunches and twigges, as it shall be declared in her chapiters folowynge. And though so be, ꝑ no man can wetenly rekene the nombre of twigges, and of the harmes that come of pryde. Yet will I declare a parte of hem, as ye shall understonde. Ther is Inobedience, avaunting ipocrisy, disdayn, arrogance, impudence, chydyng of her malencolye, vanglorie, presumpcion, pryde, contumacy, presumpcion, irreverence, pertinacy, bosting, glosyng, and many other twigges that I can not declare. Inobedience is he that disobeyeth for despite ꝑ the commaundements of god, or his goostly fader, or his temporel lorde. Avaunter is he that bosteth of the harme or of the bonte that he hath done. Ipocrite is he that wolde fayne be holden other than he is, and therefore worketh somtyme good dedes that he is not. Disdayn is he that hath despite of his neighbour, that is to say, of his even christen, or hath despite to do that him ought to do. Arrogance is he that thinketh that he hath thewes or bontes in him that he hath not, or weneth that he shulde have hem of his desertes, or elles that he demeth he is that he is not. Impudence is he that for his pryde hath no shame of his pryde ne synne. And nothinge of her, is whan man reproveth him of harme that he hath done. Impacience is he that despiseth in his ingement al other folke, as in regarde of his malice, of his cursing, of his spekyng

hynge, and of his beringe. Elacion is when he ne maye neither suffre to have mayster ne felowe. Impacyence is he that will not be taught ne rebuked of hys vyce, and by strife deweth trouth wityngly, and defendeth his folye. Contumyae is he that through his indignacion is ayenst euery autorite or power of hem that ben hys soueraygns. Presúpcion is whan a man vndertaketh an empryse that him ought not do or els that he maye not do, and this is called surquidie. Irreuerence is, whan man dothe not honoure there as hym ought to do, and loke to be reuerenced. Pertinacy is when men defende her folye, a trust to muche on her owne witte. Vayngloyre is for to have pompe and delyte in his temporel hyrnesse, and glory hym in worldely estates. Janglynge is when men spekc to muche before folke and clapperth as a mylle, and take no kepe what they saye. And yet is there a grete spece of pryde, that wayteth furste to be salewed or he wol salue, al be he lesse worthy than that other is. And also he wayteth or desireth to syttc, or els to go aboue him in the way, or kysse pace, to be entended, or go to offryng before his neighbour, and such semblable thynges ayenst his duety peraduenture, but that he hath his hert and his entente, in such a pryde desire, to be magnified and honoured before the people. Some ben there two maner of pryde. One of hem is within the herte of a man, and that other is without. Of whiche forsayd thinges forthy and moo than I haue sayd ayenst the vyce of pryde, that is in the hert of man, a other spices of pryde ben without, but nedeles, that one of these spices of pryde is signe of that other, right as the gay lewetrie at the taylle, is signe of the wine that is in the cruet. And this is in many thynges: as in sprede a countenaunce, a outragious araye of clothyng: for certes if there had ben no vyce in clothyng, Crist would not so soone haue noted and spoken of the clothynge of peryche men in the gospell. And as saynt Gregory sayth that precious clothynge is culpable, for the derthe of it and for his softenesse, and for hys straungenesse and delycyousnesse: And for the superfluite, or for the vnordynate quantite of it. Alas, may nat a mannes eye se in our dayes the frutefull costlewe array of clothynge, and namely in to muche superfluite, or els in to vnordinate straunenesse. As to the furste synne in superfluyte of clothynge, suche that maketh it so dere to the harme of the people, nat onely the coste of embraudyng, the disguised endentynge, or barrynge, oundynge, palynge, wyndynge, or bendyng, and semblable waste of clothe in vanyte. But there is also the costlewe furryng in her gownes, so muche pounsyng of chesel to make hooles, so muche daggyng of theres forthe, with the superfluite in length of the forsayd gownes, trailyng in the donge and in the mire, on horse and also on fote, as wel of manne as of woman. That all that traylynge is verely as in effecte wasted, consumed tredebare and rotten with donge, rather than it is yeue to the poore, to great damage of the forsayde poore folke, and that in sondrie wyse, this is to sayn: that the more the clothe is wasted, the more must it coste to the poore people for the scarcenesse. And moreouer, if so be that they wolde yeue suche pounsed and daggyd clothynge to the poore people, it is nat conuenient to were for her estate, ne sufficyent to her necessite, to kepe hem fro the distemperaunce of the firmamente.

Vpon that other syde, to speke of the horrible disordinate scantnesse of clothynge, as ben these cutted roppes or pansieres, through her shortnesse couer not the shameful membres of man, to wicked eyen. Alas, some of hem shewe the boost of her shape, and the horrible swolle membres that semeth like the maladie of hirsia, in the bolnynge of her boselynge, and also the buttockes of hem fare as it were the hinder part of a fle ape in the ful of the moone. And more ouer the wrecched swollen membres that they shewe through disguisynge in departynge of her hosen in whyte and red, semeth that halfe her shamefull privy membres were flayn. And also be that they departe her hosen in other colours, as is white and blewe, or white and blacke or blacke and red, and so forthe. Than semeth it as by variaunce of colour of the halfe parte of her privy membres, ben corrupte by the fire of saynt Anthony, or by cancer, or other suche mischaunce. Of the hynder part of the buttockes it is ful horrible for to se, for certes in ye partye of her body there as they purge her fleshly ordure, that foule partie shewe they to the people proudly in despite of honestie, whiche honestie that Jesu Christ and his frendes obserued to shewe in her life. Now as to the outragious aray of women, god wote that though the vysages of some of hem seme full chaste and debonayre, yet notyfye

in her array or atyre, lycorousnesse & pride: I say not ꝑ honeste i clothing of man or woman is vncouenable, but certes the superfluite of disordinat quātite of clothing is ryprouable. Also the synne of ornement or of aparayle is in thynges that appertayne to rydynge, as in company, delycate horses that ben holden for delyte, that ben so faire, facre, & costlewe, and also in many a wyce knaue, that is sustayned bycause of hem, in curious harneys, as in sadels, cropers, peytrels, & bridels couered w precious clothyng, & riche barres of plates of golde & of siluer. For whiche god saith by zacharie the prophete, I wol confounde the ryders of suche horses. These folke take litel re garde of the ridyng of goddes sonne of heuē, and of his harneis when he rode vpon ꝑ asse, and had non other harneis but the poore clothes of his disciples, ne we rede not that euer he rode on other best. I speke this for the synne of superfluite, and not for resonable honeste, when reason it requireth And more ouer, certes pride is greatly notyfied in holdynge of great meyne, when they ben of lytell profyte or of right no profite, and namely when that meyne is felonous & dāmageous to the people by hardynesse of high lordshyp, or by way of offices. For certes suche lordes sell than her lordshyppe to the deuyll of hell, whan they sustayne the wickednesse of her meyne. Or elis, whan these folke of lowe degre: as those that kepe hostelryes, sustayne thefte of her hostellers, and that is in manye maner of disceytes: those maner of folke ben the fyres that folowe the heny, or elis the houdes that folowe the caryn. Suche forsayd folke strāgel spirituelly her lordshyps: for suche, thus saith Dauid the prophet. Wicked deth might come on those lordshippes, and god yeue that they might discende in to hell, all downe, all downe: for in her houses ben iniquities and shrewdenesse, and not god of heuen. And certes, tyll they done amendement, right as god yaue hys blessyng to Pharao by the seruyce of Jacob, and to Laban by the seruyce of Joseph: Right so god wol yeue hys curse to suche lordshippes, as sustayne ꝑ wickednesse of her seruauntes, but they come to amēdement Pride of the table appereth also ful ofte: for certes, riche men ben called to festes, & poore folke ben put awaye and rebuked. And also in exces of dyuers meates and drinkes, and namely suche maner bake meates and dishe metes bytmynge of wylde fyre: peynted and castelled with paper and semblable waste, so that it is abusyon to thynke. And also in to gret preciousnesse of vessell, & curiosite of minstralcy, by which a man is sterred more to delyces of lechery, if so be that he sette hys hert the lesse vpon our lorde Jesu Christe, certaynly it is a synne. And certenly the delyces myght be so great in thys case, ꝑ a man might lightly fall by hem in to a deedly synne. The especes that surde of pride, sothly w ꝑ they sourde of malyce ymagyned, auysed, & fore caste, or elis of vsage ben deadly synne, it is no doute. And when they sourde by freelte vnauysed sodenly, and sodenly withdrawe ayen, all be they greuous sinnes, I gesse that they be not deedly. Nowe myght men aske, whereof that pride sourdeth and springeth. I say that some tyme it springeth of the goodes of nature, some tyme of the goodes of fortune, and somtyme of the goodes of grace. Certes the goodes of nature stonden onely in goodes of body, or goodes of ꝑ soule. Certes goodes of body be heel of body, strength, delyuernesse beaute, gentrye, franchise. Goodes of nature of the soule, ben good wit sharpe vnderstōdinge, subtel engin, vertue naturel, good memory. Goodes of fortune, be ryches, hye degrees of lordshyps, praysynges of the people. Goodes of grace: ben science, power to suffice spūelle ueyle, benigne, vertuous contēplacion, vnderstōdyng, of ꝛeptacion, & semblable thinges: of whiche forsayd goodes: certes it is a ful gret folye, a man to haue pryde in anye of hem all. Nowe, as for to speake of goodes of nature, god wote ꝑ somtyme we haue hem in nature asmuch to our domage as to our profit. As to speke of heel of body, truly it passeth ful lightly, & also it is ful ofte occasyon of sickenesse of the soule: for god wote ꝑ flesche is a great enemy to the soule: & therfore ꝑ more ꝑ the body is hole, the more we be in peryl to fal. Also for to haue pride in hys strength of body, it is an hye folye: for certes the flesh coueteth ayenst the spirite: & the more strong ꝑ the flesche is, ꝑ soryer may the soule be. And ouer al this strength of body & worldly hardynesse, causeth full ofte many man to peryll & mischaūce, & also to haue pride of his gentry, is ryzt great folye: for oftyme ꝑ gentry of the body, taketh awey the gentry of the soule: & also we ben all of o father and mother: & all we been of o nature, rotten & corrupt, bothe riche & poore. For soth

o maner

o maner gentry is for to praise, that apparelleth mannes courage. Wytte, vertue, a morallyte, maketh hym Christes chylde. For truste wel, that ouer what man that syn hath mastry, he is a very churle to synne.

Now ben there generall signes of gentylnesse: as eschewyng of vyce & vylanye, and seruage of synne: in worde, in werke, and cõtynuaunce and vsyng of vertue, curtesy, and clennesse, and to be lyberall: that is to saye, large by measure: for that that passeth measure, is folye and syn: Another is to remembre him of bounte, that he of other folke hathe receyued: Another is to be benygne to hys good subiectes. Wherefore saith Senecke: there is nothynge more conenable to a man of hyghe astate, than debonaire and pite. And therefore these flyes that men call bees, whan they make her kynge, they chese one that hathe no pricke, wherwith he may stynge.

Another is, man to haue a noble herte and a dilygent, to attayne to the hyghe vertuous thynges. Now certes, a man to haue pryde in the goodes of grace, is also an outragious folye: for those gyftes of grace that shulde haue tourned hym to goodnesse, and to medycyne, tourneth him to venym and confusyon, as saith sayne Gregory. Certes also, who so hath pryde in the goodesse of fortune, he is a full great fole: For somtyme is a man a great lorde by the morne, that is a caytyf & a wrecche or it be nyght: and somtyme the riches of a man is cause of his death. Somtyme the dyuers of a man, is cause of greuous maladye through which he dyeth. Certes, the commendacion of the people is, somtyme ful false and brotel for to trust. Thys day they praysse, to morowe they blame. God wote, desire to haue cõmẽdacion of ỹ people, hath caused dethe to many a busy man. Nowe sythe that so is, that ye haue vnderstonde what is pride, and whiche be the speces of it, and whence it sourdeth and springeth: nowe ye shall understõde whiche is the remedy ayenst it. Humilyte or meknesse is the remedy ayenst pryde, that is a vertue, through whiche a man hathe verye knowlege of him selfe, & holdeth of hym selfe not pryce ne dayntie, as in regarde of hys desertes, considerynge euer his freelte. Now ben there thre maner of humylytes: As humylyte in herte, another humylyte is in mouthe, and the thirde is in workes. The humylyte in herte is in four maners: That one is, whan a man holdeth him self as nought worth before god of heuen. The seconde is, whan he dispriseth non other man. The thirde is, whan he ne recketh nat, though men holde him nought worthe. And the fourth is, whan he is not sory of his humiliacion. Also the humilite of mouthe is in foure thynges. In a temperate speche, in humilite of speche, and when he confesseth with his owne mouth, that he is such as him thynketh, that he is in hys herte: Another is when he praiseth the bounte of another man and nothynge therof mynsheth. Humilite also in werke, is in foure maners. The firste is, whan he putteth other men before him, the secõde is to chese the lowest place ouer all, the thirde is, gladly to assent to good counsayle, the fourth is, to stonde gladly to the awarde of his souerayns, or of him that is in hier degre: Certayn this is great werke of humilite

¶ De Inuidia.

After pryde wol I speke of the foule synne of Enuy, which that is after the worde of the Philosofer, sorowe of other mennes prosperite. And after the worde of sayne Austyne is the sorowe of other mennes welle, and the ioy of other mennes harme. Thys foule synne is playn ayenst the holye ghoste: All be it so, that euery synne is ayenste the holy goste: Yet natheleste, for as muche as vertue appertaineth properly to the holy goste: and enuye cometh properlye of malyce, therfore it is properly ayenst ỹ boũte of ỹ holy goste. Now hath malyce two speces, that is to saye, hardinesse of herte in wickednes, or elis the blyndenesse of a man is so blynde, that he considereth nat that he is in syn, or recketh not that he is in synne, whiche is the hardinesse of the deuyll. That other spyce of Enuy is, when that a man deemeth trouth, when he knoweth ỹ it is trouth and also when he repẽteth the grace that god hath yeue to his neyghbour: & al this is by enuy. Certes, than is enuy the worst synne that is, for sothly al other sinnes be somtyme onely ayenst o speciall vertue: but certes, enuy is ayenst al vertues and al goodnesse. For it is sory ayenst al the bountes of her neighboure, and in this maner, it is dyuers from al other synnes. Alas: For there ne is anye synne that it ne hath some delite in it selfe, saue only enuye

nye, that euer hath in it selfe anguische and sorowe. The speces of Enuye been these: there is first sorow of other mennes goodnesse and of her prosperyte, and prosperyte is kyndely mater of ioye: Than is Enuye a synne ayenste kynde. The seconde spece of Enuye, is ioye of other mennes harm, & that is properly like to the deuyl, that euer reioyseth hym of mannes harme. Of these two speces cometh bacbytyng, and this synne of backbytynge or detracting hath certain speces, as thus: Some mā praiseth his neighbour by a wicked entēt for he maketh alway a wicked knot at ỳ laste ende: alway he maketh a but at the last ende that is digne of more blame, than is worth al the prayysynge. The seconde spece is, that if a mā be good, or doth or sayth a thyng to good entent, the backbyter wol turne al that goodnesse vp so downe: to hys shrewde entent. The thirde is to amenuse the bountye of hys neyghbour. The fourthe spece of backbytynge is this, ỳ if men speke goodnesse of a man, than wol the backbyter saye: Perfay suche a man is yet better than he, i dispraysynge of him ỳ menne prayse. The fyfthe spece is this, for to consēt gladly and herke gladly to the harme that men speke of other folke: This synne is ful great, & aye encreseth after the wicked entent of ỳ backbyter. After backbiting cometh grutchinge or murmuracion, and sometyme it springeth of impacience ayenst god, and sometyme ayenst manne. Ayenst god it is whan a man grutcheth ayenst payne of hell, or ayenst powerty e, or losse of catell, or ayenst rayne or tempest, or els grutcheth ỳ shrewes haue prosperite, or els for that good men haue aduersyte: & al these thynges shulde men suffre paciently, for they come by the ryghtful iugemēt and ordinaunce of god. Sometyme cometh grutchyng of auarice, as Iudas grutched ayenst Maudeleyn, whā she anoynted the heed of our lorde Ieshu Christe, with her precious oyntment. Thys maner murmuryng is such as whan man grutcheth of goodnesse ỳ hym selfe doth, or that other folke done of her own catell. Sometyme cometh murmure of pryde, as whan Simon ỳ Pharise grutched ayenst Maudeleyn whē she aproched to Ieshu Christ and wept at his fete for her synnes. And sometyme it sourdeth of enuy, whan men discouer a mans harme that was priuy, or bereth him on honde thyng that is false. Murmure also is ofte among seruauntes that grutche whan her souraines bydde hem do lefull thynges, and for as moche as they dare not openly withsay the cōmaundement of her souraines, yet wol they say harme and grutche & murmure priuely for very dyspyte: which wordes they call the dyuels pater noster, though so be that the dyuell had neuer pater noster, but ỳ lewde folke yeueth it such a name. Sometyme it cometh of yre or priuy hate, that norysheth rancour in ỳ herte, as afterwarde I shal declare. Than cometh also bytternesse of herte, throwe which bitternes euery good dede of his neyghbour semeth to him bytter & vnsauery. Than cometh discorde that vnbyndeth al maner of frendshyp. Than cometh scornynge of his neyghboure, all do he neuer so well. Than cometh accusyng, as whan man seketh occasyon to anoye his neyghboure, whyche is lyke the crafte of the dyuel, that wayteth both day and nyght to accuse vs all. Than cometh malignyte, throughe whiche a man anoyeth hys neyghbour priuely if he may: and yf he may not, algate his wicked wyl shall not let as for to brenne his house priuely, or enpoysen or sle his beestes, and semblable thynges. Nowe wol I speke of the remedye ayenst this foule synne of enuye. First is the loue of god principally, and louyng of his neyghbour as hym selfe: for sothly that one ne may not be without that other. And trust wel that in the name of thy neyghbour thou shalt vnderstande the name of thy brother, for certes al we haue one father fleshly and one mother, that is to saye Adam & Eue, and also one father spyrytuall, that is god of heuen. Thy neighbour art thou boūde for to loue, and wyll him all goodnesse, and therfore sayth god: Loue thy neyghbour as thy selfe, that is to saye, to saluation both of lyfe and soule. And more ouer thou shalte loue him in worde & in benigne admonesshing and chastysynge, and comfort him in his noyaunces, & pray for him with al thy herte. And in dede thou shalt loue him in suche wyse that thou shalt do to him in charyte, as thou woldest that it were done to thyn own perso: and therfore thou ne shalte do him no domage in wicked worde, ne harme in his body ne in his catel, ne in his soule by entisyng of wicked ensaimple. Thou shalte not desyre hys wyfe ne none of hys thynges. Understond also that in the name of neyghbour is comprehended his enemy: Certes man shall loue hys enemye by the cōmaundemēt of god: & sothly thy frende

thou

thou shalte loue in god. I saye thyne enemye, shalt thou loue for goddes sake, by hys commaundement, for if it were reason that man shulde hate his enemy, forsothe god nolde not receyue vs to his loue that been his enemies. Ayenst thre maner of wronges ꝑ hys enemye doth to him, he shal do thre thinges, as thus: ayenst hate and rancour of hert, he shall loue hym in hert: Ayenst chiding & wicked wordes he shall praye for his enemye: Ayenst wycked dedes, he shal do him boute. For Christ saith: Loue your enemyes, and praye for hem that speke you harme, and for hem that chace and pursue you: and do bountye to hem that hate you. Lo, thus cõmaundeth vs our lorde Jesu Christ to do to our enemyes: Forsothe nature diuerth vs to loue our frendes, & parfay oure enemyes haue more nede of loue than our frẽdes, & they that more nede haue, certes to hem shal mẽ do goodnesse. And certes in that dede haue we remembraunce of the loue of Jesu Christe that dyed for his enemyes: And in as muche as that loue is more greuous to perfourme, so much is the more gret the merite, and therfore the louyng of our enemye hathe confounded the deuyls venym: For ryght as the deuyl is confounded by humilite, right so is he wounded to the deth by the loue of our enemy, certes thã is loue the medicyn that caseth out the venym of enuye fro mans herte. The spices of this place shal be more largely declared in ther chappyters folowyng.

¶ De Ira.

After Enuye woll I dyscryue the syn of Ire, for sothly who so hath Enuy vpon his neighbour, anone he woll comenge fynde hym a mater of wrathe in word or in dede, ayenst him to whome he hath enuye: And as wel cometh ire of pryde as of enuye, for sothly he that is proude or enuyous is lyghtly wrothe This syn of yre, after the diffynycyon of saynt Austyn is wicked wyl to be auẽged by worde or by dede. Ire after the Philosopher, is the feruent blode of man yquicked in hys herte, through which he wold harme to him that he hateth: for certes the herte of man by eschauffyng & mouing of his blood, wexeth so troubled, that it is out of al of maner iugement of reason. But ye shall vnderstonde that Ire is in two maners, that one of hem is good, and that other is wicked. The good ire is by tricusye of goodnes through which a mã is wroth with wickednesse, & ayenst wickednesse. And therfore saith a wise man, that ire is bet than playe. This ire is with debonairte, and it is wroth without bitternesse, not wrothe ayenst the man, but wrothe with the misdede of the man: As sayth the prophete Dauid: Irascimini, et nolite peccare. Now vnderstõde that wicked ire is in two maners, that is to saye, sodayne ire or hasty ire without aduysement & consentyng of reason: The meanynge and the sence of this is, that the reson of a man ne cõsent not to that sodeyne ire, and than it is venyall. Another ire is ful wicked, that cometh of felonye of hert, auised and cast before, with wicked wyll to do vengeaunce and therto his reson cõsenteth: and sothly this is deedly syn. This ire is so displesaunt to god, that it troubleth his house, and chaseth the holy goste out of mans soule, and wasteth & distroyeth that likenesse of god, that is to say, the vertue that is in mans soule, and putteth in hym the likenesse of the deuyl, and taketh the man fro god that is his rightful lorde. This is a ful great displesaunce to the deuil, for it is the deuils forneys that is eschauffed with the fyre of helle. For certes ryght so as fire is more mighty to distroye erthly thynges than any other elemẽt, right so ire is mighty to distroye al spyrytuel thynges. Loke howe that fyre of smale coles that been almoste deed vnder ashen, wol revyue or quicke ayen when they been touched with brimstone, right so ire wol euer more quicken ayen whẽ it is touched by the pride that is couered in mans herte. For certes fire ne may nor come out of nothyng, but if it were fonde in ꝑ same thing naturally: as fyre is drawen out of flyntes with steel. And right so as pryde is many tymes mater of ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of Ire. There is a maner tree, as sayth saynt Isodore, that whan a man maketh fyre of the sayde tree, and couereth the coles of it with ashen, sothly the fyre of it wol laste a yere or more: And right so fareth it of rancour when it is ones conceyued in the herte of some men, certes it woll laste peraduẽture from one Ester day vnyll an other Ester day or more. But certes the same man is ful ferre from the mercy of god al ꝑ while.

In thys forsayd deuyls forneys ther forge thre threwes: Pryde that aye bloweth and encreaseth the fire by chyding and wicked wordes:

des: Than stondeth enuye and holdeth hotte yron in the fyre vpon the herte of man with a payre of long tonges of longe rancoure. And than stondeth the synne of cõtumelie or stryfe and chyde, and batereth and forgeth by vylaynous reproeuynges. Certes this cursed syn anoyeth bothe to the man hym selfe and also hys neyghboure. For sothely almoste all the harme or damage that any man dothe to hys neighbour commeth of wrath: for certes outragious wrathe dothe all that euer the soule fende wylleth or cõmaundeth hym, for he nesparethneyther our lorde Jesu Christ, nether his swete mother. And in his outragious angre and yre, alas alas, full manye and dyuers at that tyme, feleth in his herte full wickedlye bothe of Christe and also of all his halowes: Is not this a cursed vyce-yes certes. Alas it taketh fro man his witte and his reason, and all his debonayre lyfe spirituell that shoulde kepe his soule. Certes it withdraweth also goddes dewe lordshyp, that is mans soule, and the loue of his neyghbours. It stryueth also al daye ayenst trouthe, it reueth hym the quyete of his herte, and subuerteth his soule

Of yre cometh thyse stynkyng engendrures. First hate, ỹ is olde wrath, Discorde, through whyche a man forsaketh his olde frende that he hath loued full longe. And than commeth werre and euery maner of wrõge that a man dothe to his neyghboure in body or in catell.

Of this cursed synne of yre cometh also manslaughter. And vnderstonde well that homycide, that is manslaughter is in dyuers wyse:

Some maner of homycide is spirituell, and some is bodely. Spirituel manslaughter is in .vi. thynges. First by hate as sayth sayntt Johan: He that hateth hys brother, is an homicide. Homicide is also by backbityng, of whiche backbytyng sayth Salomon, that they haue two swerdes, wyth whych they sle her neyghbours: For sothely as wicked is to take fro him his good name as his lyfe. Homicide is also in yeuynge of wycked counsell by fraude, as for to yeue counsayle to areyse wrongful customes, and talages. Of whiche saith Salomon: A lyon rorynge and a beere hungrye, be lyke to the cruell lordes in withholdyng or abredgyng of the hyre of the wages of seruauntes, or elles in vsurye, or in wythdrawynge of the almesse of poore folke. For whiche the wyse man sayth. Feedeth hym that almooste dyeth for honger, for sothly but if ye fede hym ye slee hym. And all these been deedly synnes. Bodely manslaughter is when thou sleest hym with thy tonge: In other maner is, when thou commaundest to slee a man, or elles yeuest counsayle to slee a man. Manslaughter in dede is in foure maners. That one is by lawe, right as a Justyce dampneth hym that is culpable to the deth. But let the Justyce beware that he do it rightfully, and that he do it not for delyte to spyll bloode, but for kepynge of rightwysnesse. An other homicide is done for necessyte, as when a man sleeth an other in his defence, and that he ne may none other wyse escape without slaughter of his aduersarye, he doth synne, and he shall beare penaunce as for deedly synne. Also yf a man by case or aduenture shote an arrowe or caste a stone, with which he sleeth a man, he is an homicide. Also if a woman by negligẽce ouerlyeth her childe in her slepynge, it is homicide & deedly synne. Also whan man disturbleth conceptyon of a chylde, and maketh a woman eyther barayne by drinkynge of venemous herbes, through whyche she may not cõceyue, or sleeth a childe by drynkes, or els putteth certayne materiall thynges in her secret places to sle the chylde, or els doth vnkyndly synne, by which a man or a woman sheddeth her nature in maner or in a place there as a chylde maye not be conceyued. Or els yf so be that a woman hathe conceyued, and hurteth her selfe, and by that mishappe the chylde is slayne, yet it is homicide. What say we of those women that murdren her children for bycause of eschewynge of worldely shame? Certes it is an horryble homicide. Homicide is also if a manne approche to a woman by desyre of lechery, thorough whyche ỹ childe is perished, or els sinneth a woman wittyngly, through whyche she leseth her chylde: Al these ben homicides and horrible deedly synnes. Yet come there of vre mo sinnes, as well in worde as in thought, and dede. Is he that arreteth vpon god, or blameth god of the thyng of which he is him selfe gylty, or dispyseth god and al hys halowes, as don the cursyd hasardours in diuers coũtreys: This cursyd synne don they, whan they sele in her herte ful wickedly of god and of hys halowes. Also when they trete vnreuerẽtly the sacrament of the auter, that sinne is so gret that vnneth it may be releced, but that the mercy of god passeth al his werkes,

it is

it is so great and he so benygne. Than cometh of ire an atterly angre, whan a man is sharply amonested in his shrift to leaue hys synne: Than wol he be angrye, and answere hokerly and angerly, or defend or excuse his synne by vnstedfastnesse of his flesche, or els he dyd it for to holde companye with his felowes, or els he sayth the fende enticed him, or els he doth it for his youthe, or els his complexcions so corragious that he may not forbeare, or els it is his destenye he saith vnto a certayne age, or els he saith it cometh him of gentylnesse of hys auncestters, and semblable thynges. All these manet of folke so wrappe hem in her synnes, that they ne woll not delyuer hemselfe: For sothly no wight that excuseth him selfe wilfully of his synne, may not be delyuered of his synne tyll that he meekely beknoweth his synne. After thys than cometh swearynge, that is expresse avenste the cómaundement of god, and this befalleth often of angre and of ire. God sayth. Thou shalte not take the name of thy Lord god in veyne or in ydell. Also oure lorde Jesu Christ sayth by the worde of saynte Mathew: Ne woll ye not swere in al maner, neyther by heuen, for it is goddes trone, ne by erth, for it is the benche of his fete, ne by Hierusalem, for it is the cite of a great kyng, ne by thyn heed, for thou mayste not make an heere neyther white ne blacke: but saye by youre worde, ye ye, naye, naye: and what that is more, it is of yuell. Thus sayth Christe For Christes sake swcare not so synfully in dysmembrynge of Christe: By soule, herte, bones, and body, for certes it semeth that ye thinke that the cursed Jewes ne dismembred not ynoughe the precious person of Christ, but ye dismembre him more. And yf so be that the lawe compell you to swere, thā ruleth you after the law of god in your swerynge, as sayth Jeremye. iiii. cap. Thou shalte kepe thre condycyons, thou shalte swcare in trouthe, in dome and in ryghtwisenesse, this is to saye, thou shalte swcare sothe. For euery lesynge is avenst Christ, for Christe is verye trouthe. And thynke wel this that euery great swearer not compelled lawfully to swere, the plage shal not departe fro his house, while he vseth suche vnlefull swearynge. Thou shalte swere also in dome, whan thou arte constreyned by thy domes man: to wyte nesse trouthe: Also thou shalte not swcare for enuye, neyther for fauour, nether for mede, or rewarde, but onely for ryght wisnesse and for declarynge of it to the honour and worshyppe of god, and to the aydynge and helpe of thyne euyn Christen. And therfore euery man that taketh goddes name in ydell, or falsely swcareth with his mouthe, or els taketh on him ỳ name of Christe to be called a Christen man, and fyghteth avenst Christes lyuynge and his techinge, all they take goddes name in ydell. Loke also what sayth saynt peter, Actuum iiii. capitu. Non est aliud nomen sub celo &c. There is none other name sayth saint Peter vnder heuen yeue to men, in whych they may be saued, that is to say, but the name of Jesu Christe. Take hede eke howe precyous is the name of Jesu Christe, as saith saynte Poule, ad Philipenses. ii. In nomine Jesu &c. That in the name of Jesu euery kne of heuenly creatures, erthly, and of hell shulde bowe, for it is so hye and so worshypfull, that the cursed fende in hell shulde tremble to here it named. Than semeth it that men that swere so horribly by hys blessed name, that they dispyse it more boldely than the cursed Iewes, or els the dyuel that trēbleth whan he heareth his name.

Nowe certes sythe that swearyng, but if it be lawfully done, is so hyely defended more more is forswerynge falsely, and yet nodelesse.

What say we also of hem that delyte hem in swearyng, and holde it a gentrye or a manly dede to swere great ottes. And what of hem that of very vsage ne cease not to swcare great ottes, all be the cause not worthe a straw. Certes this is horrible synne. Swearyng so dedely is also a great syn. But let vs go nowe to that horrible synne swearynge of adiuration & cōiuracyon, as done these false enchantours or nigramācers in basyns ful of water, or in a bright swerde, in a cercle, in a fyre, or in the sholderbone of a shepe. I cannot saye but that they done cursedly and dampnably avenst Christ, & al the fayth of holy churche.

What saye we of hem that byleue on Dremales, as by flyght or by noyse of brides, or of beestes, or by sorte, by Scōmancie, by dremes, by chirkyng of dores or crakyng of houses, by gnawyng of rattes, and suche manere wretchydnesse. Certes all these thynges bene defended by god and holy churche, for which they ben accursed yf they come to amendemēt that on suche fylthe sette her byleue. Charmes for woundes or maladye of men or of beestes, if they take any effecte, it may be paraventure that god suffreth it, for folke shulde yeue the more fayth & reuerence to his name.

Now

Now wol I speke of leasinges which generally is false signyfyaunce of wo3de in entent to disceyue his euen christen. Some leasyng, is of whiche there cometh none auaun-tage to no wyght, and some leasynge turneth to the profyte o3 ease of a man, and to the damage of a nother man. A nother leasyng is for to saue his lyfe o3 his catel, which cometh of delyte for to lye, in whyche delyte they wol forge a longe tale, & peynt it wyth all circumstaunces, where all the tale of the grounde is false. Some leasyng cometh for he wol susteyne his wordes: Some leasyng cometh of recheleshesse wythoute auysement, and semblable thynges. Lette vs nowe touche the vyce of flatery, whiche ne cometh not gladly but for drede, o3 for couetyse. Flatery is generally wrongfull praysyng. Flaterers ben the deuels nourrces, that norysshe his children wyth mylke of losyngerye: forsoth Salomon sayethe that flatery is worse than detraction, for somtyme detraccion maketh an hauteyne man be the more humble, for he dredeth detraction, but certes flatery maketh a man enhaunce his herte and his countenaunce. Flaterers be the deuels enchaūtours, for they make a man to wene him selfe be lyke, that he is not lyke. These be lyke to Iudas that betray a man to sel hi to his enemy. Flaterers ben the deuels chapleyns that euer synge placebo. I reken flatery in the vyces of yre: for ofte tymes a man be wrothe wyth a nother, than wol he flatre some wyght to inflamme hym in his quarell. Spoke we nowe of suche cursynge as cometh of rouse herte. Swerynge generally may be sayd euery maner pouert of harme: Suche cursinge bereueth man fro the knigne of God, as sayethe sayncte poule. And ofte tyme suche cursynge wrongfully retorneth ayen to hym that curseth, as a byrde that turneth ayen to his owne nestr. And ouer all thyng men ought eschewe to curse her children and seruē to the deuel her engendrure as ferre forthe as in hem is: certes it is great perill a great synne. Lette vs than speke of chydynge and reproche, whiche ben full great woundes in mans herte, for they breke the fryndes of frendshyp in manies herte: for certes vnneth maye a man playnlye be accorded wyth hym, that him openly hathe reuyled and reproued, and disclaundred: This is a full goostly synne as Christe saith in the gospell. And take hede howe that he that reproueth his neyghboure, eyther he reproueth hym by some harme of payne that he hath vpon his bodye, as meselry, crokednesse, harlotrye, o3 by some synne that he doth. Nowe yf he reproue hym by harme of payne, than turneth the reproffe to Jesu Christe: for payne is sende by the right wise sonde of god, and by his sufferaunce, be it meselry, meyme, o3 malady: And yf he reproue hym vncharytably of synne, as thou holour, thou dronkelewe harlot, and so forthe. Than pertayneth that to the reioysynge of the deuell, whyche euer hath ioy that men done synne. And certes chydyng maye not come but of vilaynous herte, for after the haboundaunce of the herte speketh the mouthe full ofte. And ye shall vnderstonde, that loke by any waye whan any man shal chastyse o3 correcte another, that he be ware from chidyng o3 reproeuyng: for truely but he be ware, he may full lyghtly quicken the fyre of angre and of wrathe, whyche he shulde quenche: And peraduenture sleeth his whiche he myght chastyse with benignyte. For as saith Salomon: The amiable tonge is the tree of lyfe, that is to saye, of lyfe spirituell. And forthy a dyssolute tonge sleeth the spirites of hym that reproueth, and also of hi which is reproued. Lo, what saith saincte Iagustyn: There is nothyng so lyke the deuels chylde, as he whiche ofte chydeth.

A seruaunt of god behoueth not to chide. And thogh that chydynge be a vylaynous thyng bet ouer all maner folke, yet it is certes most vncouenable bitwene a man and his wife, for there is neuer rest. And therfore saith Salomon: An house that is vncouered and dropping and a chydyng wyfe, ben a lyke.

A man whiche is in a droppynge house in many places, thoughe he eschewe the droppynge in o place, it droppeth on hym in another place: So fareth it by a chydyng wife, yf he chyde hym in one place he wol chide him in a nother. And therfore better a greatly more pleasaunce is a mosell of yrell gobet of bred with ioye, than an house fylled full of beestes wyth chydyng and gnetynge, saythe Salomon. Saynte poule sayethe: O ye women, beth ye subgette to your husbondes, as you behoueth and oughte in god: And ye men loueth your wyues, ab Colonicenses. iii.

Afterward speke we of frotynge which is a wycked synne, and namelye whan he frotteth a man for hys good werches: for certes suche frotners fare lyke the foule Tode, that

maye

maye not endure to smell the swete sauour of the wyne whan it flouryssheth. These scorners ben partyng felowes with the dyuel, for they haue ioye whan the dyuell wynneth, and sorowe if he leseth. They bene aduersaryes of Jesu Christ, for they hate that he loueth, that is to say, saluacion of soule.

Spoke we nowe of wicked counsayle, the whyche is a traytour, for he disceyueth hym that trusteth in him: Ut Achitofel ad Salomonem. But Natheiesse, yet is hys wycked counsayle first ayenst hym selfe, for as sayethe the wyse man: euery false lyuinge hath this propertie in hym selfe, that he that woll anoye another man, he anoyeth first hym selfe. And men shall understonde, that man shal not take his counsayle of false folke, ne of angry folke, or greuous folke, ne of folke that loue specially to moche worldlye folke, namelyy in counsaylyng of soules.

Nowe cometh the synne of hem that sowe and make discorde amonge folke, whiche is a synne that Christ hateth bitterly, and no wonder is: for he deyde for to make concorde. And more shame do they to Christe than dyd they that hym crucifyed: for god loueth better that frendshyp be amonges folke than he dyd his owne bodye, whyche that he gaue for vnyte. Therfore ben they lykened to the dyuell that euer be aboute to make discorde. Now cometh the synne of double tonge, such as speke fayre before folke, and wyckedly behynde, or els they make semblaut as though they spake of good entencion, or els in game and playe, and yet they speke of wycked entent.

Nowe commeth bewrayeng of counsaile, through whyche a man is dyffamed. Certes herein may he restore the damage. Nowe cometh menace, that is an open folye, for he that ofte menaceth, he threteth more than he may performe full ofte tyme. Nowe cometh ydell wordes, that is without profyte of hym that speketh ye wordes, & also of hym that herketh the wordes: Or els ydell wordes ben those that bene nedelesse or without entent of natureli profyte. And al be it that ydel wordes be sometyme venyal syn, yet shulde men doute hem, for we shall yeue rekenynge of hem before God. Now cometh iangelynge that may not be withoute synne. And as sayth Salomon: it is a sygne of a pert folye. And therefore a philosopher sayd whan men asked hym howe that he shulde pleate the people, be answerde: Do many good werkes & speke fewe wanytes. After thys commeth the synne of iapertes, that ben ye dyuels apes, for they make folke to laughe at her iaperye, as folke do at the gawdes of an ape: which iapes defendeth saint Poule. Loke howe that vertuous wordes and holy cõforte helm that trauayle in the seruyce of Christ. Right so comforteth ye vylanous wordes and knackes of iapers hem, ye trauayle in the seruice of the deuel. These ben the synnes of the tonge, that come of yre and of other synnes.

¶ The remedy ayenst Ire.

The remedy ayenst Ire, is a vertue ye men cal Mansuetude, that is Debonaire, and also another vertue that men clepe Pacience or sufferaunce. Debonaire withdraweth and refreyneth the steryynges and mouynges of mannes corage in herte, in suche maner that they ne skrppe nat out by angre ne yre. Sufferaunce suffreth swetely all the anoyances & wronges that men done to man outwarde.

Seynt Jerome sayth this of debonaire, that it doth no harme to no wight ne saythe me for no harme that men do ne say, he ne chaffeth & yeuit reason. This vertue somtyme commeth of nature: for as sayth ye philosopher. A man is a quicke thinge by nature, debonaire & reasonable to goodnesse: but whan debonaire is enformed of grace, than it is the more worthy.

Pacience is another remedy ayenst ire, and is a vertue that suffreth swetely euery mannes goodnesse, and is nat wroth for no harme that is done to him. The philosopher sayth, that pacience is the vertue that suffreth debonairly all the outrages of aduersyte, & euery wycked worde. This vertue maketh a man lyke to god, and maketh hym goddes owne childe: as sayth Christe. This vertue defendeth thin enemies. And therfore sayth the wyse man: Yf thou wolde venquysshe thyn enemye learne to suffre. And thou shalt vnderstonde that a man suffreth foure maner of grenaunces in outwarde thynges, ayenste the whyche four he must haue four maner of pacyences.

The fyrste grenaunce is of wicked wordes which suffred Jesu Christ wythout grutchig full pacyently, whan the iewes dyspised hym full ofte. Suffre thou therefore pacyently, for the wyse man sayethe: Yf thou stryue wyth a foole, though the foole be wroth or though he

laugh, alwaye thou shalt haue no rest. That other greuaūce outwarde is to haue domage of thy catell: There ayenst suffred Christ ful paciently, whan he was dispoyled of all that he had in this lyfe, and that was but his clothes. The thirde greuaunce is a man to haue harme in his body: That suffred Christe full pacyently in al his passyon. The fourthe greuaunce is in outragyous labour in werkes: wherfore I saye, that folke that make her seruaunces to trauayle to greuously or out of tyme, as in holy dayes, sothely they do greate synne. Here ayenst suffered Christe full pacyently, and taught vs pacyence, whan he bare vpon his blessed shulders ꝑ crosse, vpon whiche he shuld suffre dispytous dethe. Here may men lerne to be pacient, for certes not onelye christen be pacyente for loue of Jesu Christe, and for rewarde of the blessed lyfe that is perdurable, but certes the olde Paynems that neuer were Christened, commēded and vsed the vertue of pacyence. A philosopher vpon a tyme that wold haue bete his discyple for his great trespace, for whiche he was moued, and brought a rodde to beate the childe, and whā this chylde sawe the rodde, he said to his mayster: What thynke ye to do? I woll beate the sayde the mayster for thy correction: Forsoth sayd the childe, ye ought first correct your self that haue lost al your pacyence for the offence of a childe. Forsothe sayde the mayster al weping, thou sayest sothe: Haue thou the rodde my dere chylde, and correcte me for myne impaciēce. Of paciēce cometh obediēce, through whiche a man is obediēt to Christ & to al hem to whiche he ought be obedient in Christ. And vnderstande wel ꝑ obedience is perfyte whan that a man dothe gladly & hastely with good hert entierly, all that he shulde do. Obedience generally is to performe the doctryne of god and of his soueraignes, to whych him ought to be obeysaunte in al ryght wisnesse.

Of the Accidia.

After the synnes of Enuye and yre, nowe woll I speke of the synne of Accidie: for enuy blindeth the hert of a man, and yre troubleth a man, & accidie maketh hi heuy, thoughtful & pēsyf. Enuy & ire make bitternesse i hert, whiche bitternesse is moder of accidie, & taketh fro hi the loue of al goodnesse, than is accidie the anguysshe of trouble of herte. And sayne Augustyn saithe: It is anoye of goodnesse & anoye of harme. Certes thys is a dampnable sinne, for it doth wronge to Jesu Christe, in as moch as it benōmeth the seruice that men ought do to Christ, as sayth Salomon: but Accidie dothe no suche dilygence. He dothe all thyng with anoye and with wrawnesse, slacknesse, and excusacion: with ydelnesse and vnlust.

For whiche the boke saithe. A cursed be he that dothe the seruice of God negligently. Than is accidie enemy to euery estate of mā. For certes the estate of mā is in thre maners. Eyther it is in the estate of Innocencye, as was the estate of Adam before that he fyll in to synne, in whiche estate he was hold to worke, as in prayeyng & laudyng God. Another estate is the estate of synfull men: in whyche estate men bene holden to labour in prayenge to god for amendemēt of her sinnes, and that he wol graunt hem to ryse oute of her synnes.

Another estate is the state of grace, in whiche state he is holden to workes of penitence: and certes to al these thinges is accidie cōtrary, for he loueth no busynesse at all. Now certes, this foule synne accidie is also a ful great enemy to the lyfelode of ꝑ body, for it ne hath no purueyance ayenst tēporell necessitee, for it forsloweth, forslogeth, and distroyeth al goodes tēporel by recheleasnesse. The .iii. thynge is, ꝑ accidie is lyke hem that ben in the payne of hell, bicause of her slouthe & heuynesse: for they that be dampned ben so bound, that they may neither well do ne thynke. Of accidie cometh first that a man is anoyed & encōbred to do any goodnes, & maketh that god hath abhomynation of suche accidie, as sayth sayne John. Nowe cometh slouth that wol nat suffer no hardnesse ne penaūce: for sothly slouth is so tender & so delycate, as sayth Salomon, that he wol suffer no hardnesse ne penaūce, & therfore he marreth all ꝑ he doth. Ayenst this rotten syn of accidie & slouthe, shulde men exercise hem self & vse hem to do good workes: and manlye & vertuously catche corage to do, thynkyng that our lorde Jesu Christ quyteth euery good dede, be it neuer so lyte. Vsage of labour is a greate thynge. For it maketh, as sayethe sainte Bernarde, the labourer to haue stronge armes and harde senewes: & slouthe maketh heuy, feble, and tender. Than cometh drede to begyn to worke any good workes. For certes he that enclynethe to synne, him

hym thynketh it is so great an empryse for to vndertake the workes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte, that the circumstaunces of goodnesse bene so greuous and weyghtye for to suffre, ꝑ he dare not vndertake to do workes of goodnesse, as saith saint Gregorye.

Now cometh wanhope, that is dispeyre of the mercy of god, that cometh somtyme of to moche outragious sorowe, and somtyme of to moche drede, ymaginynge ꝑ he hathe do so moche synne, that it woll not auayle hym, tho he wolde repent him and forsake synne: thorough whiche dispeyre or drede, he abandonneth all his herte to euertye manere synne, as sayth sayntt Augustyne. Whiche dampnable synne, yf it contynewe vnto his ende, it is called synnyng in the holygost.

This horryble synne is so perylous, that he that is dispeyred there nys no felony ne no sinne that he douteth for to do, as shewed wel by Judas. Certes aboue all synnes than is this synne most displesant to Christe & moost aduersarye. Sothlye he that dyspeyreth hym is lyke to the cowarde champyon recreaunte, that fleeth without nede. Alas alas, nedeles is he recreaunt, and nedelesse dispayred. Certes the mercy of god is euer redy to the penytent person, and is aboue al his werkes.

Alas canne not a man bethynke hym on the gospell of sayntt Luke.xv. Where as Christe sayth, that as well shall there be ioye in heuen vpon a synfull man that dothe penytẽce, as vpon foure score & nyneteene ryghtfull men that nede no penytence. Loke ferther in the same gospel the ioye and the feest of the good man that had lost his sonne, whan his sonne with repentaunce was retourned to hys father. Canne they not remembre hem also, that as sayth the sayntt Luke Capiter.xx. howe that the theefe that was hanged beside Jesu Christ, said: Lorde remembre me, whan thou comest in to thy reigne.

Forsothe said Christe, I saye to the: To daye shalte thou be with me in paradyse. Certes, there is nõ so horryble synne in man, that ne may in his lyfe be distroyed by penytence, thorought bertue of the passion and of the dethe of Christe. Alas what nede men than to be dispayred, sythe that his mercy is so redy and large? Aske and haue. Than commeth slompnolence, that is sluggy, slombringe, which maketh a man heuy and dull in bodye & in soule, and this synne cometh of slouthe: And certes the tyme that by waye of reason man shulde not slepe, is by the morowe, but yf there were cause reasonable. For sothely the morowe tyde is most conuenable a man to say his prayers, and for to thanke god, & to honoure god, and to yeue almesse to the poore, that cometh firste in the name of Jesu Christe. Lo, what sayth Salomon, who so wol by the morowe awake to seke me, he shall fynde me. Than cometh negligence or retchelesnesse, that recketh of nothynge. And though that ignorannce be mother of al harmes, certes negligence is the norryce. Negligence ne dothe no force whan he shall do a thynge, whether he do it well or yuell. The remedye of these two synnes is, as sayth the wise man: That he that dredeth god spareth not to do that he oughte to do, & he that loueth god he wol do dylygẽce to plese God by hys werkes, and abandone him selfe wyth all his myghte well for to do. Than cometh ydelnesse, that is the yate of all harmes. An ydel man is lyke to a place ꝑ hath no walles, ꝑ dyuell may entre on euery syde, or shote at him that is discouert, by temptacion on euery syde. This ydelnesse is the thorruke of all wycked and vylayne thoughtes, and of all ordure. Certes the heuen is yeue to hem that wyll laboure, and not to ydell folke. Also Dauid sayth, that they ne be not in the laboure of men, ne they shall not be whypped with men, that is to saye in purgatorye. Certes than semeth it they shall be tormented wt the dyuels in hell, but yf they do penaunce.

Than cometh the synne that men cal Tardias, as whan a man is so latered, or tarynge or he wol tourne to god: and certes that is a great folye. He is lyke hym that falleth in the dyche, and woll not aryse. And thys byrd cometh of false hope, that he thynketh he shall lyue longe, but that hope fayleth ful often.

Than cometh lachesse, that is he that whan he begynneth any good worke, anon he wol leaue and stynte it, as done they that haue any person to gouerne, and ne take of hym no more hede, anon as they fynde any contrarye or any anoye. These ben the newe shepherdes, that let theyr shepe wittyngly go renne to the wolfe that is in the bieres, or do not force of her owne gouernaunce. Of this cometh pouerte and distruction bothe of spirituell and temporell thynges. Than cometh a maner coldnesse that freseth the herte of man. Than cometh vndeuotion, throughe whiche a man

is so blont, and as saith saynt Bernarde, hath suche langour in his soule, ꝑ he maye neyther rede ne synge in holy churche, ne here ne thike of no deuocyon, ne trauayle with his bondes in no good worke, that it nys to him vnsauery and all apalled. Than wexeth he slowe and slombry and soone wol be wrothe, and soone is enclyned to hate and enuye. Than cometh the synne of worldly sorowe, suche as is called Tristitia, that sleeth a man, as sayth sait Poule. For certes suche sorowe worketh the dethe of the soule and body also, for therof cometh that a man is anoyed of his owne lyfe. Wherfore suche sorowe sherteth full ofte the lyfe of man, er that his tyme is come by way of kynde.

¶ Remedium contra peccatum Accidie.

Ayenst this horrible synne of Accidie, and the braunches of the same, there is a vertue that is called Fortitudo or strengthe, that is an affection, throughe whyche a man dispyseth anoyous thynges: This vertue is so myghty and so rygorous, that it dare withstōd mightyly, and wysely kepe hym selfe fro perylles that bene wycked, and wrastell ayenst thassautes of the deuel, for it enhaunceth and enforceth the soule, right as accidie abateth & maketh it feble: for this fortitude may endure by lōge suffraunce the trauayles that ben couenable. This vertue hath many speces, the first is called Magnanimite, that is to say, gret corage. For certes there behoueth gret corage ayenst Accidie, lest that it ne swalowe ꝑ soule by the synne of sorowe, or distroye it by wanhope. Certes this vertue maketh folke vndertake harde and greuous thynges by her owne wil wysely and resonably. And for as moch as the deuyl fyghteth ayenst a man more by subtylte & sleight than by strength, therfore shall a man withstonde hym by witte, reason, and discrecion. Than are there ꝑ vertues of fayth and hope in god and in his saintes, to eschue and accomplyche the good workes, in ꝑ whiche he purposeth fermely to continue. Than cometh suerty or sikernesse, and that is whan a man ne douteth no trauaile in time cōming, of the good workes that he hath begonne. Than cometh Magnificence, that is to saye, whan a man doth and perfourneth great workes of goodnesse that he hath begon, and that is thende why that men shulde do good workes. For in the accomplyshinge of good workes, lyeth the great guerdon. Than is there Constaunce, that is stablenesse of corage, and this shulde be in hert by stedfast faith, and in mouthe, in beryng, in chere, and in dede. Also there ben mo speciall remedies ayenst accidie, in dyuers workes: as in consyderacion of the paynes of hell, the ioyes of heuen, and in trust of the grace of the holy goost, that wyl yeue him myght to perfourme his good entent.

¶ De Auaricia

After Accidie wol I speke of Auarice, and of couetise. Of whiche synne S. Poule saith: the rote of all harmes is couetise, ad Timoth. vi. For sothly whan the herte of man is confounded in it selfe and troubled, and that the soule hath loste the comforte of God, than seketh he anydell solace of worldly thynges. Auarice, after the dyscripcion of saynt Augusten, is a feorousnes in herte to haue erthly thynges. Some other folke say, that auarice is for to purchace many erthely thynges, & nothing to yeue to hem that haue nede.

And vnderstond that auarice stondeth not onely in londe ne catel, but sometyme in fame and glorye, & in euerye maner of outragious thynges is auarice. And couetise is this. Couetise is for to coueit such thinges ꝑ thou hast nat. And auarice is to with holde & kepe suche thynges as thou hast without ryght. Sothly this auarice is a synne that is fuldānable, for all holy writ curseth it, & speketh ayenst ꝑ vice, for it dothe wrong to Jesu christ: for it taketh fro him the loue that men to hym owe, and tourneth it backewarde ayenste all reason, and maketh that the auaryctous man hath more hoope in hys catell, than in Jesu Christe, and dothe more obseruaunce in kepyng of his treasour, than he doth in the seruyce of Jesu Christ. And therfore saith saynt Poule: ad Ephesios quinto: That an auaryctous man is the thraldome of idolatrye. What differences is there betwixt an ydolaster and an auaricyous man? But that an ydolaster paraunenture ne hathe nat but a mawmet or two, and ꝑ auaricious man hathe many. For certes euerye florein in his coffre, is his Mawmet. And certes the syn of mawmetry is the first that god defended, as in the i. cōmaundemente it beareth witnesse, in Exo-

di.

di. capi. xx. Thou shalte haue no false goddes before me, ne thou shalte make to the no graue thynge. Thus is an auaricyous man, that loueth hys treasour before god, an idolater. And throughe thys cursyd synne of auaryce and Couetyse, cometh these harde lordshyppes, through which they ben streyned by tillages, customes, and carryages, more than her deutye or reason is, or elles take they of her bondmen amerciamentes, whiche myght more resonably be called extorcios than merciamétes. Of whiche amerciamentes or raúsomynge of bondemen, some lordes stewardes saye that it is rightful, for as muche as a churle hath no temporell thynge, that it ne is hys lordes, as they say. But certes these lordshippes do wrong, that bereue their bondmé thynges that they neuer gaue hem. Augustinus de Ciuitate dei. Libro. iv. Soothe is that the condicion of thraldom, and the first cause of thraldome was for synne.

Thus may ye se, that thoffence deserued thraldome, but nat nature. Wherfore these lordes ne shulde not much glorify hem in her lordshyps, sythe that they by naturall condicion ben not lordes ouer thrales but for that thraldom came firste by the deserte of synne. And more ouer there as the lawe sayth, that temporell goodes of bonde folke ben the goodes of her lorde: yea, that is for to vnderstonde, the goodes of the emperour, to defend hem in her ryght, but not to robbe hem ne reue hem. Therfore sayth Seneca: thy prudence shulde lyue benignely with the thralles. Those that thou calleste thy thralles, ben goddes people: and for humble people ben Christes frendes, they ben cõtubernial with the lordes. Thinke also that of suche sede as chorles springe, of such sede spring lordes: as wel may þ chorle be saued as the lorde. The same deth that taketh the chorle, suche deth he taketh the lorde. Wherfore I rede do right so with þ chorle as thou woldeste that thy lorde dyd with the if ỹ were in his plyghte. Euery synfull man is a chorle to syn: I rede the lord certes, that thou werke in suche wise with thy chorles, þ they rather loue the than drede the. I wote well that ther is degre aboue degre, as reason is, and skyl is that men do her deuoure there as it is due. But certes extorcions and dispite of youre vnderlynges is dampnable. And forthermore vnderstonde well, that these conquerours or tyraunnes make full ofte thralles of hem that ben borne of as royall blode as ben they that hem conquere. Thys name of thraldom was neuer erst know, tyl that Noe sayd that his sonne Canam shulde be thrall to hys brethren for hys synne. What say we than of hem that pyll and do extorcions to holy churche: Certes the swerd that men yeue first to a knyght, when he is newe dubbed, signifyeth that he shulde defende holye churche, and not robbe and pyll it, and who so dothe is traytour to Christe. And as sayth the saynt Iustyn, they been the deuils woulues that strangle þ shepe of Jesu Christ, and don worse than woulues, for sothly when the woulfe hath full his woombe, he stynteth to strágle shepe: But sothly the pyllours and distroyers of holy churth goodes ne do not so, for they ne stynt neuer to pyll. Nowe as I haue sayde, sythe so is that synne was first cause of thraldome, thus it. thus, that at þ tyme that al this worlde was in synne, than was al this world in thraldom and in subiection, but certes syth the tyme of grace came, god ordayned þ some folke shulde be more hye in estate and in degree, and some folke more lowe, and that eche shulde be serued in his estate. And therfore in some countreys there they be thralles, whan they haue turned hem to the fayth, they make her thralles free out of þ thraldom: and therfore certes the lorde oweth to his man that þ man oweth to the lorde. The pope calleth hym selfe seruaunt of the seruaũtes of god, but for as the estate of holy churche ne might not haue ben, ne the comen profyte might not haue be kept, ne peace ne rest in erth, but if god had ordayned that some man had hyer degre, and some men lower: Therfore was soueraynte ordayned to kepe mayntayne, and defende her vnderlynges and her subiectes in reason, as ferforthe as it lyeth in her power, and not to destroy ne confounde hem. Wherfore I say, that those lordes that ben lyke woulues þ deuore the possessyons or the catell of poore folkes wrongfully, without mercye or mesure, they shal receyue by þ same mesure that they haue mesured to poore folke, the mesure of Jesu Christ but it be amended. Nowe cometh discrete bitwix marchaunt & marchaunt. And thou shalt vnderstonde that marchaundise is in two maners, that one is bodyly, and that other is goostly: that one is honest and lefull, and that other is dishonest and vnlefull.

The bodely marchaundise that is lefull & ho-

nesse is this: that there as god hath ordayned that a reigne or a countraye is sufficiaunte to hym selfe, than it is honeste and leful that of habundaunce of thys country, menne helpe an other countrye that is nedy: And therfore there must be marchauntes to bringe fro one countrye to that other her marchaundyse.

That other marchaundise that men haunten with fraude, and trecherye, and dyssceyte with leasinges and false othes, is right cursed and dampnable. Espirituell marchaundyse is properlye Symonye, that is entencyfe desyre to bye any thyng espirituell, that is a thing whiche apertayneth to the sanctuarye of god, and to cure of the soule. Thys desyre if so be that a man do his dilygẽce to performe it, al be it that his desyre ne take none effect, yet it is to him a deedly sinne, and if he be ordred, he is irreguler. Certes symonye is called of Symon magus, that would haue bought for temporel catel the yefte that god had yeue by the holy goste to sayne Peter and to the apostels: And therfore vnderstõde that he that selleth & he that bieth thinges espirituels, ben called Symonyackes, be it by catel be it by procurynge or by fleshly prayer of his frendes, fleshly frendes or espirituel frendes: fleshly in two maners, as by kynred or other frendes: & othrly if they praye for him that is not worthy and able, it is symonye if he take the benifyce, & if he be worthy and able there is none. That other maner is whan man or womã prayeth for folke to auaũce hem onely for wicked fleshly affeccion whiche they haue vnto the persons, and that is foule symonye. But certes in seruyce, for whiche men yeuen thinges espirituel vnto her seruaũtes, it must be vnderstonde that the seruyce muste be honest, or els not, & also that it be without bargeyn', and that the person be able. For as sayth the sayne Dama sen: All the synnes of the worlde at regarde of thys synne, are as thing of nought, for it is the grettest sinne that may be after the synne of Lucifer & of Antichriste: For by this sinne god forleseth ỳ churche and the soule which he bought with his precious blod, by hem that yeue churches to hem that ben not worthy, for they put in theues hõdes that stale the soules of Jesu Christ, & distroi his patrymonye. By suche vnworthy prestes and curates haue leude men lesse reuerence of the sacramẽtes of holy churche, and such yeuers of churches put ỳ childien of Christ out and put i the church the diuels owne sonnes: they sei the soules that lambes shulde kepe to the wolf which strangleth hem: and therfore shall they neuer haue parte of the pasture of lambes, that is the blysse of heuen. Nowe cometh hasardrie with his apertenaunces, as tables and rasles, of whiche cometh disceyte, false othes, chydinges, & all rauynesse blasphemynges, and reuenges of god, and hate of hys neighbours, waste of goodes, mispendynge of tyme, and sometyme manslaughter. Certes hasardours ne mowe not be without great synne. Of Juarycc cometh also lesynges, theft, false witnesse, and false othes: and ye shall vnderstonde that these be great synnes, and expresse ayenste the cõmaundementes of god, as I haue sayde. False witnesse is in worde, & also in dede: In worde as for to bryeue thy neighbours good name by thy false witnesse, or bryeue hym his catel or his herytage, by thy false witnessyng, whan thou for yre or for mede, or for enuye, beares false witnesse, or accuseth hym, or excuseth thy selfe falsely. Ware ye questmongers and notaries: Certes for false witnessynge was Susan in ful great sorowe & payne, and many an other mo. The syn of theefte is also expresse ayenste goddes hest, & in two maners, copoxel & spirituel, ỳ tẽporel, theft is: As for to take thy neibours catell ayenst hys wyll, be it by force, by sleight, be it by mette or by mesure: by stellynge also of false endytementes vpon hym, and in borowyng of thy neighbours catell, & entent neuer to pay it ayen, & semblable thynges. Espirituell theft is sacrilege, that is to say, hurtyng of holy thynges sacred to Christ in two maners, by reson of the holy place, as churches or churche yerdes: for which euery vilaynous synne that men done in suche places may be called sacrilege, or euery violence in the semblable places Also they that withdrawe falsely the rightes that longe to holy churche and pleysyng. And generally sacrilege is to reue holy thing fro holy place, or vnholy thing, out of holy place, or holy thynge out of vnholy place.

¶ Relevacio contra peccatum Juaricie

Nowe

NOwe shall ye vnderstonde, that releuynge of auarice is misericorde and pyte largelye taken. And men myght aske why that misericorde and pyte are releuing of auarice: certes the auaricious manne sheweth no pety ne misericorde to the nedefull man.

For he delyteth hym in the kepynge of hys treasure, and nat in the releuynge ne releuynge of his euyn christen. And therfore spe-ke I first of misericorde. Than is mysericorde as sayth the philosopher Auerroe, by whiche the corage of man is stered, by the mischief of hym that is diseased. Upon whi-che misericorde foloweth pyte, in performing and fulfyllyng of charitable workes of mer-cy, helpeth and comforteth hym that is misca-ted. And certes these thinges moue and stere a man to misericorde of Jesu Christ, that he yaue hym selfe for our offence, & suffred dethe for misericorde, and forgaue vs our originall synnes, and therby releaseth vs fro the paynes of hell, and mynysshed the paynes of purga-tory by penitens, and yeueth grace wel to do, and at laste the blysse of heuen. The speces of misericorde ben for to lene, and also for to yeue: for to forgeue and release, & for to haue pyte in herte and compassion, of the mischefe of hys euyn christen, and also to chastise there as nede is. Another maner of remedye ayenst auarice, is resonable largesse: but sothly here behoueth the consideracio of ỳ grace of Jesu Christ, and of the temporell goodes, and also of the goodes perdurable ỳ Jesu Christ yafe to vs, and to haue remembraunce of the deth which he shal receyue, he knoweth not whā, where, ne who: and also that he shal forgo all that he hath, saue onely that whiche he hathe expended in good werkes.

But for, as muche as some folke been vn-mesurable, menne oughte for to auoyde and eschue folysche largesse, the whiche some peo-ple call waste.

Certes he that is foole large, yeueth not his catell, but he leseth hys catell.

Sothly what thing that he yeueth for veyn-glory, as to mynstrels and to folke that beare his renome in the worlde, he hath syn therof and none almesse: certes he leseth foule hys good ỳ he ne seketh with the yeft of his good nothyng but synne. He is lyke to an horse that seketh rather to drinke drouy or troubled wa-ter than for to drynke water of the clere well. To hem appertenen the sayd cursynge, that Christ shall yeue at the daye of dome, to hem that shal be dampned.

Sequitur de Gula.

AFter Auarice cometh Glotony, which is expresse ayenst the co-maundement of god. Glotony is vnmesurable appetyte to eete or to drinke, or elis to do y-nough to the vnmesurable ap-petyte and dysordeyned coueitise to eate or to drinke. This synne corrupteth al this world, as is well shewed in the synne of Adam & of Eue. Loke also what saith S. Poule of glo-tony. Many saith he gon, of which I haue of-ten said to you, & now I say it wepyng, ỳ ben the enemyes of the crosse of Christ, of whiche the ende is deth, & of which her wombe is her god & her glory, in confusion of hem that so de-moure erthly thynges. He that is vsed to thys synne of glotonye, he ne maye no synne wyth-stonde, he must be in seruage of all vices, for it is the Deuyls hourde, there he hydeth and reseth him. Thys synne hathe manye speces. The fyrste is dronkennesse that is the horrible sepulture of mans reson: and therfore whan a man is dronke he hath loste hys reson: And this is deedly synne. But sothly whan that a man is not wonte to strong drinke, and par-auenture ne knoweth not the strength of the drinke, or hath febleisse in his heed, or hath tra-uayled, through which he drinketh the more, al be he sodaynly caught with drinke, it is no deedly synne, but venyall. The seconde spece of glotonye is, that the spirite of a man wex-eth al troubled, for dronkennesse bereueth him the discrecion of his wyt.

The thirde maner spece of glotonye is whan a man deuoureth his meate, & hath not ryght full maner of eatynge. The fourthe is whan through the great abundaūce of his mete, the humours in his body bene destempred. The fyfth is foryetfulnesse by to moche drinkyng, for whiche sometyme a man forgetteth er the morwyng what he dyd on the euenyng before.

In other maner ben distynct the speces of glotonye after sayn̄t Gregorye. The fyrste is for to eate before tyme to eate. The second is whan a man gyueth him to delycate meat or drinke

drinke. The thirde is when men take to moche ouer measure. The fourthe is curiosyte, with great entent to make and apparayll his meate. The fifthe is for to eate to gredely.

These ben the fiue fyngers of the dyuels hõde, by whiche he draweth folke to synne.

¶ The remedy ayenst Glotony.

Ayenst glotonye the remedy is abstynence, as sayethe Salyene: but that I holde nat me rytorious, if he do it for the heale of his body. Sayntе Augustyne will that abstynence be done for vertue, and with patience. Abstynence (saithe he) is lytel worthe, but if a man haue good wyll therto, and but if he be enforced by patience and charyte, and that men do it for goddes sake, and in hope to haue blysse of heuen. ¶ The felowes of abstynence be attemperaunce, that holdeth the meane in all thynges. Also shame that eschueth all dishonestie. Suffisaunce that seketh no ryche meates ne drinkes, ne dothe not force of outrageous, appayrelynge of meate. Measure also, that restrayneth by reason, the vnmeasurable appetyte of eatyng. Sobernesse also, that restrayneth the outrage of drinke. Sparynge also, that restrayneth the delicate ease to sitte longe at meate, wherfore some folke flonden of her owne wyl when they eete, bycause they wol eate at lesse leasure.

¶ De Luxuria.

After Glotonye cometh Lechery, for these two sinnes ben so nye cosins, that oft tyme they wol nat departe. God wote thys synne is full displesaunte to god, he forsayde hym selfe: do no lechery. And therfore he putteth great paynes ayenst thys synne.

For in the olde lawe, if a woman thrall were take in this sinne, she shulde be beate with staues to dethe. And if she were a gentil woman she shulde be slayne with stones. And yf she were a bysshops doughter, she shulde be brent by goddes cõmaundement. ¶ More ouer by the syn of lechery, god drowned all the world and after that he brent fyue cities with thunder and lyghtynge, and sanke hem in to hell.

Nowe let vs speke than of the sayde stynkyng synne of lechery, that men cal auowtrye of wedded folke, that is to saye, if that one of hem be wedded or els bothe.

Sayntе Johan sayeth, that auoutrers shalbe in hell in a stacke brennynge of fyre and of brimstone for the stenche of her ordure: certes the brekyng of this sacramente is an horryble thyng: It was made of god hym self in paradyse, and confirmed by Jesu Christe, as wytnesseth sayntе Mathewe in the gospell: A man shall leaue father and mother & take hym to hys wyfe, and they shal be two in one flesh.

Thys sacrament betokeneth the knyttynge togyther of Christe and holy churche. And not onely that god forbade auoutrye in dede, but also he cõmaunded that thou shuldest not coueyte thy neighbours wyfe. In this byfle sayethe sayntе Augustyn is forboden al maner couetyse to do lechery. Lo, what sayth sainte Mathewe in the gospell, that who so seeth a woman to couetyse of his luste, he hath done lechery with her in his herte. Here maye ye se that not onely the dede of this sinne is forboden, but also the desire to that synne. Thys cursed synne anoyeth greuously hem that it haunt: and first to her soule, for he obligeth it to synne and to payne of deth, which is perdurable. Vnto the body anoyeth it greuously also, for it drieth hym and wasteth, and shendeth hym, and of his bloode he maketh sacrifyce to the fende of hell: It wasteth hys catell and his substaunce. And certes if it be a foule thynge a man to waste his catell on women: yet it is a fouler thynge whan that for suche ordure women dispende vpon men her catell and her substaunce. Thys synne as sayethe the Prophete, taketh from man and woman her good fame and her honoure, and it is full delectable and pleasaunte to the dyuell. For therby wynneth the more parte of thys wretched worlde. And ryght as a marchaunt delyteth hym moste in that chaffare whiche he hath most auauntage and profyte of, ryght so delyteth the fende in thys ordure.

Thys is that other honde of the dyuell, with fyue fyngers, to catche the people to his vsage. The firste is the folysshe lokynge of the folysshe woman and of the folysshe man, that sleeth right as ꝑ Basilicok or cocatrice sleeth folke by venym of hys syght: for the coueytyse of the eyen foloweth the couetyse of the herte. The secõde finger is the vilanous touchyng in wicked maner. And therfore sayth Salamon

mon: that who so toucheth and handeleth a woman, he fareth as the man that handeleth the scorpion, whiche stingeth and sodayneiye sleeth through his enuenyming, or as who so that toucheth warme pytche blemischeth hys fyngers. The thirde is foule wordes, whiche fareth lyke fyre, whiche right anon brenneth the herte. The fourth fynger is the kyssyng: And truely he were a great foole that wolde kysse the mouthe of a brennynge ouen or of a fornays. And more fooles ben they that kysse in vylanye, for that mouthe is the mouth of hel, and namely these olde dotardes holours, whiche wol kysse and flycker, and besy hem selfe thoughe they maye nought do. Certes they ben lyke to houdes: for an houde whā he cometh nyghe to the roser, or by other benches, though so be ỳ they maye not pysse, yet wol he heue vp his legge and make a countenaunce to pysse. And for that manye manne weneth that he maye not synne for no lycorousnesse that he doth with hys wyfe. Truely that opynyon is false: God wote a manne may slee hym selfe with his owne knyfe, and make hym selfe dronke with his owne tonne. Certes be it wyfe, be it childe or any worldly thing, that he loueth before god, it is his mawmet, and he is an ydolastre. A man shoulde lone his wife by discrecion, paciently and attemperatly, and than is she as though it were hys suster. The fyfthe fynger of the dyuelles honde is the stynkyng dede of lechery. Truely thy fyue fyngers of glotonye the dyuell putteth in to the wombe of a man: And with hys fyue fyngers of lecherye he grypeth hym by the reynes, for to throw him in to the fornels of hell, there as they shall haue the fyre and the wormes that euer shal laste, and wepyng and waylyng, and sharpe hungre and thrust, grymnesse of dyuels, whiche shall all to trede hem withouten ende. Of lecherye as I sayde sourdeth and springeth diuers speces: as fornication, that is betwene man and woman whiche be not maryed, and is deedly synne, and ayenst nature: All that is enemye and distruccion to nature is ayenst nature. Peccaye the reason of a man telleth him well also that it is deedly sinne, for as much as god forbade lecherye. And sayntc Poule reueth hem the reigne that nis dewe to no wight but to hem that done deedly synne. Another synne of lecherye is to byreue a maydes maydenhed, for be that dothe, certes he casteth a mayden out of the hyest degre that is in this presente lyfe, & byreueth her that precious fruite that the boke calleth the hundreth fruites, I ne can saye it none other wyse in Englysshe, but in latyn it highte (Centesimus fructus) Certes he that so doth is the cause of many damages and blames, mo than any manne can reken: right as he is cause of many domages sometyme that beestes do in the felde, that breake the hedge or ỳ closure through whiche he destroyeth that may not be restored: for certes no more maye maydenhed be restored than an arme that is smitte fro the body maye returne ayen and were: She maye haue mercy, this wote I well, if that she haue wyll to do penitence, but neuer shall it be that she nas corrupte. And al be it so that I haue spoke somwhat of auoutry, also it is good to shewe the perylles that longe to auoutrye, for to eschewe that foule synne. Auoutrye in latyn is for to saye, approchynge of an other mannes bedde, throughe whiche theese that sometyme were one flesshe, abondon her bodies to other persons. Of this synne as saythe the wise man folowe many harmes: Fyrste breakynge of faythe, and certes in fayth is the keye of christendome: and whan that fayth is broken and loste, forthy christendom hath lette and without fruite. This synne also theefte, for theefte generally is to reue a wight his thyng ayenst his wyll. Certes thys is the foulest theefte that may be, whan that a woman steleth her body fro her husbonde and reueth it to her holour to defoyle her, and stealeth her soule fro Christe, and reueth it to the dyuell: Thys is a fouler theefte than for to breake a churche and steale away the chalyce. For these auoutrers breke the temple of god spyrytuelly, and steale the vessell of grace that is the body and the soule: For whiche Christe shall distroye hem, as sayth sayntc Poule. Forthyse of this theefte doubted greatly Ioseph, whan that his lordes wife prayed hym of vylanye, whan he sayde: Lo my lady howe my lorde hath take to me vnder my warde, all that he hath in this worlde, ne nothyng of hys thynges is out of my power, but onely ye that be his wyfe: and howe shoulde I than do thys wickednesse and syn so horrible ayenste god, and ayenst my lorde, god it forbede. Alas, all to lytel is suche trouthe nowe founde. The

thirde harme is the lyth, through which they breake the cómaundemente of god, and defoule the auter of matrimonye, that is Christe. For certes in so moche as the sacrament of maryage is so noble and so dygne, so moche is it greater syn for to breake it: For God made maryage in paradyse in the estate of innocencie, to multyplye mankynde in the seruyce of God, and therfore is the brekynge therof the more greuous, of whyche brekyng come false heyres ofte tyme, that wrongfully occupie folkes heritages, and therfore woll Christe put hem oute of the reygne of heuen, that is heritage to good folke. Of this brekyng cometh also ofte tyme that folke bnware wedde or synne with her owne kynrede: and namelye these harlottes that haunte bordels of these foule women, that may be lykened to a commune gonge, where as men pourge her ordure. What saye we also of putours, that lyue by the horryble synne of putrie, and constreyne women to vse to hem a certayne rent of her bodily putrie, yr somtyme of his owne wyf or his childe, as done these baudes: Certes these ben cursed synnes. Vnderstonde also that auoutrye is ferre aladye in the ten commaundementes bn worse than fleyr, or manslaughter, for it is the greatest thefte that may be, for it is thefte of bodye and of soule, and it is lyk to homicide for it kerueth a two & breketh a two hem that first were made of one flesshe. And therfore by olde lawe of god they shuld be slayne, but nathelesse by the lawe of Jesu Christe, that is lawe of pyte, whan he sayd to the woman that was soubt in auoutrye, and shulde haue be slayne with stones after the wyll of the Jewes, as was her lawe: Go sayd Jesu Christe, and haue no more wyll to do synne. Nathles the bengraunce of auoutrye is assigned to the peynes of hell, but yf so be that it be bystourbed by penytence. Yet ben there mo spyces of this cursed synne, as what that one of hem is religious or ys holy, or of folke that bene entred into ordre, as subdeken, deken, or preste, or hospytaliers. And ouer the hier that he is in ordre the greater is the synne. The thinges that greatly aggregge her synne is the brekyng of her auowe of chastyte whan they receyueth the ordre. And more ouer sothe is that holy ordre is chefe of al the ensorie of god and his especiall signe & mark of chastyte, to shewe that they bene ioyned to chastyte, which is the most precious lyfe that is: and these ordred folke ben specially tyed to god and of the specyall meyne of god, for whyche whan they done deedly synne they ben the traytours of god & of his people, for they lyue of the people. Prestes ben aungelles as by the dignite of her mistorye, but forsothe sayn Poule sayth that Sathanas transfourmeth hym in an aungell of lyghte. Sothely the preste that haunteth deedly synne he may be lykened the aungell of darkenesse, transfourmed in the aungell of lyght, he semeth angel of lyght, but forsoth he is angel of darkenesse. Suche prestes be the sonnes of Hely, as shewed in the booke of kynges, that they were the sonnes of Belial, that is the deuil. Belial is to saye without iudge, and so ferre they, ben thynketh they be free and haue no iuge, no more than hathe a free bulle that vseth whiche cowe that hym liketh to pisse. So fare they by women, for tyght as one fre bulle is ynoughe for all a toune, right so is a wicked preest corruption ynough for al a parysshe, or for al a countrey: These prestes as sayth the boke, ne can not mynistre the mysterye of preesthode to the people, ne they know not god, they ne holde hem not apayed, as sayth the boke, of sodden flesshe that was to hem offred, but they toke by force the flesshe that was raue. Certes, so these shrewes ne holde hem not apayed of rosted & sodde flesshe, with which the people frode hem in great nourrence, but they wolle haue raue flesshe of folkes wyues and her doughters, and certes these women that conseyl to her harlotry done great wrongе to Christe and to holy churche, al halowes, and al soules, for they bryng all these hem that shulde worshyp Christ & holy churche, and praye for christen soules, and therfore haue suche prestes and her lemans also that conseyl to her lechery, the cursynge of all the route christen, tyll they come to a mendement. The thirde spece of auoutrye is somtyme betwixt a man and hys wyfe, and that is whan they take no regarde in her assemblynge, but only to her fleshly delyte, as sayth sayn Jerome, and ne reken of nothyng but that they ben assembled because they ben maryed, all is good ynoughe, as they thynke: but in suche folke hath the dyuell power, as sayd the angel Raphael to Tobye, for in her assemblyng they put Jesu Christe out of her herte, and yeue hem selfe to all ordure. The

fourthe

fourthe spece is the assemble of hem that ben of one affynyte, or els of hem, with which her fathers or her kynred haue dealed in the sinne of lecherye: Thys synne maketh hem lyke to hounds, that take no kepe to kyntede. And certes parétele is in two maners, eyther goostly or flesshly: goostly as for to deale with hys godsyb, for ryghte so as he that engendreth a childe is his flesshly father, right so is his god father his father espirituell: for whyche a woman maye in no lesse synne assemble with her godsyb, than with her owne flesshely brother. The fyfth spece is that abhominable synne, of whiche abhominable synne no man ought ought speke ne write, natheless it is openly reherced in holy wryt. This cursed sinne doth men & women in dyuers entent and in diuers maner: But though that holy wryte speke of horrible sinne, certes holy writ may not be defouled, no more than the sonne that shyneth on the dongbyll. An other synne aperteyneth to lechery that cometh slepyng, and this sinne cometh often to hem that bene maydens, and also to hem that be corrupt, and thys synne men call pollucion, that commeth of thre maners: Sometyme of languissbyng of body, for the humours ben to ranke and habundaut in the body of man, sometyme of infirmyte, for feble nesse of the vertue retentyfe, as physyke maketh mencyon: Sometyme for surfet of meate and drinke, & sometyme of vilaynous thoughtes that ben enclosed in mannes mynde whan he goth to slepe, whiche may not be withoute syn, for which men must kepe hem wysely, or els may men synne ful greuously.

¶ Remedium contra peccatum futurum.

NOwe cometh the remedye ayenst lecherye, and that is generally chastyte and continence that refrayne al disordynate meuinges þ come of flesshely talentes. And euer the greater mervyte thal he haue þ more refrayneth the wycked chaufynges of the ordour of this synne, and this is in two maners: That is to saye, chastyte in maryage, and chastyte in wydewhede. Now shalt thou vnderstonde that matrymony is lefull assemblynge of man and woman that receyuen by vertue of this sacrament, the bonde through which they may not be departed in al her lyfe, that is to say, while that they lyue both. Thys, as saith þ boke, is a ful great sacrament, god made it as I haue sayd in paradyse, & wolde hym selfe be borne in maryage: & for to halowe mariage he was at a weddyng, where as he turned water into wyne, whyche was the fyrst myracle that he wrought in erthe before his disciples. Terrin effecte of marryage clenseth fornycacion and replenissheth holy church of good lynage, for that is the ende of mariage, & chaugeth deedly synne into venyall synne, bytwene hem that ben wedded, and maketh the hertes as one of hem that ben wedded, as wel as the bodyes.

Every mariage was establyshed by god, er that synne began, whan naturall lawe was in his ryght poynte in paradyse. And it was ordayned that o man shoulde haue but o woman, and o woman but o man, as sayth saynt Augustyn, by many reasons.

Fyrst for mariage is figured betwix Christ and holy churche.

Another is for a mannes hed of a woman, alwaye by ordynaunce it shulde be so. For yf a woman habbe mo men than one, than shulde she haue mo heedes than one, and that were a ryght horrible synne before god, and also a woman myght not please to many folke at ones: and also there shulde neuer be rest ne quiete amonge hem, for eche of hem wolde aske her owne ryghte. And furthermore the man shulde knowe his owne engendrure, the who shuld haue his heritage, and the woman shulde be the lesse beloued.

Now cometh how that a man shulde bere him with his wyfe, and namely in two thynges: that is to saye, in suffraunce and reuerence, as shewed Christe whan he first made woman. For he ne made her of the heed of Adam, for she shulde nat clayme to great lordshyppe, for there as the woman hath the maistrye she maketh to moche varyaunce, there nede no mo ensamples of this, the experience all day, ought ynoughe suffice.

Also certes, god ne made not woman of the foote of Adame, for she shoulde nat be holde to lowe, for she cannot pacyentlye suffre: but God made woman of the rybbe of Adam, for woman shuld be felow vnto man.

Man shuld beare him to his wife in faith, in trouth, and in lone, as saith saynte Poule) that a man shulde loue his wife, as Christ loueth holy churche, that loued it so wel that he

dyed for it: so shulde a man for his wyfe, yf it were nede. ¶ Nowe howe that a woman shulde be subiecte to her husbond: that telleth sayne peter, fyrste in obedience. And also as sayth the Decre: A woman that is a wyfe, as long as she is a wife, she hathe none auctorite to swere ne beare wytnesse, wythout leaue of her husbonde þ is her lorde, alwaye he shuld be so by reason. She shulde also serue hym in al honeste, and be attemperate of her array.

I wol wel that they shuld set her entent to please her husbondes, but nat by quentise of her array. Saint Jerom saith: wiues that be apparelled in silke & precious purple, ne mow not clothe hem in Jesu christe. Saint Grego. saithe also: þ no wyght seketh precious aray, but onelye for vainglorye to be honoured the more of the people. It is a great foly a woman to haue grea: array outwarde, & in her selfe be foule inwarde. A wyfe shulde also be mesurable in lokyng, in beatynge, & in laughyng, & discrete in all her wordes & her dedes, and above all worldly thynges she shuld loue her husbonde with all her hert, and to him be true of her bodye: So shulde an husbond be to his wyfe: for sythe that all the body is the husbondes, so shuld her hert be, or els there is betwyxte hem two, as in that no perfyte mariage. Than shall men understonde that for thre thynges a man & hys wyfe flesshly maye assemble. The first is for thentent of engēdrure of children to the seruyce of god, for certes þ is the cause fynal of marrymonye. Another cause is to yelde eche of hem to other þ dettes of her bodyes, for neyther of hem hath power ouer her owne bodyes. The thirde is for to eschue lechery & vilanye. The fourthe is forsoth deedly synne. As to the first is meryt orie: the seconde also, for as sayth the decre, þ she hath meryte of chastyte that yeldeth to her husbōd the det of her body, ye though it be ayenst her lykyng & the luste of her hert. The thirde maner is venyall synne, and truely scarcely maye any of these be without venyall synne for the corruption & for the delyte. The fourthe maner is for to understond, if they assemble only for amorous loue, & for none of the forsayde causes, but for to accomplysshe the brennyng delyte, they reck not how oft, sothly it is deedly sinne: and that with sorow some folke wol payne hem more to do thā to her appetyte suffiseth. ¶ The seconde maner of chastyte is for to be a clene wydowe & eschewe the embrasynges of a man, and desyre the embrasyng of Jesu Christe: These ben these that haue ben wyues, and haue forgote her husbandes, and also women that haue done lechetye, & ben recouerd by penitence. And certes if that a wife coulde kepe her al chaste by ryeuce of her husbōde, so that she yeue neuer none occasyō that he offend, it were to her a great merye. This maner of woman that obserueth chastyte in clothynge and in countenaunce, abstynence in eatynge and drinkynge, in spekyng & in dede, she is the beste of the bore of the blessed Mary delayne that fulfylleth holy churche of good odoure. The thyrde maner of chastyte is virginyte, and it behoueth that she be holye in herte, and clene of bodye, than is she spouse of Jesu Christe, and she is the lyfe of Angels: she is the prayseng of this worlde, and she is as these martyrs in regaly: She hath in her that tonge may not tell ne herte thynke. Virginite bare our lorde Jesu Christe, and virgin was him selfe.

¶ Another remedye ayenst lechetye is specially to withdraw suche thinges as yeue occasion to that vylanye: as ease, eatynge, and drinkynge: For certes whan the potte boyleth strongly, the best remedy is to withdraw the fyre. Slepynge longe in great quiete is also a great nourrye to lechery.

¶ Another remedy ayenst lechery is that a man or a woman eschewe the compaynie of hem by whiche he douteth to be tempted: for all be it so that the dede is wythstonde, yet is there greate temptacyon. Sothely a white walle, all thoughe it ne brenne not fulfer by slyckynge of the candell, yet is the wal blacke of the flame. Full ofte tyme I rede that no man truste in hys owne perfection, but he be stronger than Sampson, or holyer than Danyell, or wyser than Salomon.

Nowe after that I haue declared you as I canne, the fourn deedlye synnes, and some of her braunches, with her remedyes. Sothly if I coude, I wolde tel you the tenne cōmaundementes, but so hye doctryne I putte to draunes. Natheless I hope to god they ben touched in this treatyse eche of hem

¶ Sequitur secunda pars penitencie.

Nowe

NOwe for asmoche as the secõde part of penytence stont in cõfessiõ of mouth as I begame in the first cha. I say sayme Austyn sayth: Synne is euerye worde & euery dede, and all that men conuerte ayenst the lawe of Jesu Christe, and thys is for to synne in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by the fyue wyttes, whyche bene syght, herynge, smellynge, tastynge or sauour, and felynge. Nowe is it good to vnderstonde, that that aggregeth moche euery synne. Thou shalte consyder what thou art that doest the synne, whether thou be male or female, yonge or olde, gentyll or thrall, free or seruaunt, hole or sicke, wedded or single, ordred or vnordred, wise or fole, clerke or seculer, yf she be of thy kynrede bodyly or gostly, or no, yf any of thy kynrede haue synned wyth her or no, & many mo thynges. Another circumstaunce is this, whether it be done in fornycation or in auoutrye or no, in maner of homicide or no, horryble greate synnes or small, and howe longe thou hast cõtynued in synne. The thirde circumstaunce is the place there thou haste done synne, whether in other mennes houses or in thyne owen, in felde, in churche or in churchyarde, in churche dedycate or no. For yf the churche be halowed and manne or woman spyll his kynde within that place by waye of synne or wycked temptacion, the church is enterdyted, and the preest that dyd suche a vyllanye, the terme of al his lyfe, he shulde no more synge masse, and if he dyd, he shulde do deedly syn at euery tyme that he so songe masse. The fourth circumstaunce is, by whyche medyatours or by whyche messangers, or for enticement, or for consentement to beare company wyth felowshyp. For many a wretche for to beare company, woll go to the dyuell of hell. Wherfore they that egge or consent to the sinne, ben partyners of the synne, and of the temptation of the synner. The fyfthe circumstaunce is how manye tymes that he hathe synned, yf it be in his mynde, & howe ofte he hath fallen. For he that ofte falleth in syn, he dispyseth the mercy of god and encreseth hys syn, and is vnkynde to Christe, and he wereth the more feble to withstonde synne, and synneth the more lyghtly and the latter ryseth, and is more slow to shryue him, and namely to him that is his confessour. For whyche that folke whan they fall ayen to her olde folies, eyther they leaue their olde confessour, or els they departe her shrifte in dyuers partes. But sothly suche departed shryft deserueth no mercy of god for her synnes. The syxt circumstaunce is, why that a man synneth as by temptacyon: and of hym selfe procure that temptacyon, or by the crye-yng of other folke, or yf he synne with a woman by force or by her assent, or yf ỳ women maugre her heed haue be a forced or none.

This shal she tel, whether it were for coueytyse or pouerte, or if it wer by her procurement or no, and suche other thynges. The seuenth circumstaunce is, in what maner he hath do hys synne, or how that she hath suffred that folke haue do to her. And the same shall the man tel playnely with all the circumstaunces, & whether he hath synned with cõmen bordel women or none, or done hys synne in holye tymes or none, in fastynge tyme or none, or before hys shryft or after his later shryfte, and hath paraventure broke therby his penaunce enioyned, by whose helpe or whose counsaile, by sorcery or craft, al must be tolde, & all these thynges after as they be grete or smale, and grudge the cõscience of man or woman. And eke ỳ preest that is thy iudge, may the better be auysed of his iudgement in yeuynge of penaunce, & that is after thy contrecyon. For vnderstonde well that after tyme that a man hath defoyled his baptyme by synne, yf he wol come to saluacyon there is non other way but by penaunce, shrifte, and satisfaction, and namelye by the two, yf there be a confessour to whom he may shryue him, and the thyrd if he haue lyfe to performe it. Than shall a man loke and consyder, that if he wol make a trewe and a profytable confessyon, there muste be four condycions.

First it must be in sorowfulnesse of herte, as sayth the kyng Ezechiel to god, I woll remembre me all the yeres of my lyfe in bytternesse of my herte. This condicion of bytternesse hath fyue sygnes. The fyrst is, that cõfessyon muste be shamefaste, not for to couer ne hyde her synne, for he hath offended his lorde God and defoyled hys soule. And herof sayth saint Augustyn: The herte trauayleth for shame of his synne, & for he hathe great shamefastnesse he is worthy to haue great mercy of god, whiche was the confession of the Publycan, that wolde nat heaue vp his eyen to heauen for he had offended god of heuen: for whiche shamfastnesse he had anon the mercye of God. And therof sayth sayne Augustyn: that such sham-

ful folde be myne forgeuenesse and mercy.

Another signe is humilyte in confessyon of whyche sayth seynt peter: humbleth you vnder the myght of god: the hond of god is stronge in confession, for therby god forgeueth the thy synnes, for he alone hath the power. And thys humilyte shal be in herte, & in outwarde signes: for right as he hath humylite to god in his herte, right so shulde he humble his body outwarde to the preest, that sitteth in goddes stede. For which in no maner, sythe that Christ is souerayne, and the preest meane and mediatour betwyxt Christ and ỳ synner, and the synner is lorde by wayes of treason. Than shulde not the synner sytte as hye as his confessour but knele before him or at his fete, but if sykenesse cause it: for he shal not take hede who sytteth there, but in whose place he sytteth. A man that hath trespassed to a Lorde, and cometh to aske mercye and make his accorde, & sytteth hym downe by him, men wolde holde him outragious and not worthye so soone for to haue remissyon of hys trespace.

The thirde signe is, howe thy shrifte shulde be full of teares if thou maye, & yf thou maye not wepe with thy bodyly eyen, than wepe in thyne herte, whiche was the confession of S. Peter. For after that he hadde forsake Jesu Christ, he went out and wepte ful bitterly.

The fourth signe is, that thou ne lette not for shame to shewe thy cõfessyon: Such was the confession of Magdaleyn, that ne spared for no shame of hem that were at the feest, to go to our lorde Jesu christ & beknowe to him her synnes. The fyfthe signe is, that a man or a woman be obeyssaunte to receyue the penaunce that hem is enioyned. For certes Jesu Christ, for the offences of man was obedient to death. The seconde condition of very confessyon is, that it be hastely done. For certes, yf a man had a bredly wounde, euer the lenger that he taryeth to hele him self, the more wolde it corrupt and haste him to his dethe, & also the woude wold be the worse for to hele. And ryght so fareth synne, that longe tyme is in a man vnshewed. Certes a man oughte hastely shewe his synnes for many causes, as for drede of dethe, that cometh ofte sodaynly, and no certayne what tyme it shall be, ne in what place, and also the drenching of a synne drawyth in another: and also the lenger that he taryeth the farther he is fro Christ. And if he abyde to his laste daye, scarcelye maye he shryue hym or remembre hym of hys synnes, or repent for ỳ greuous malady of hys dethe. And for as muche as he ne hath in his life her kened Jesu Christe whan he hath spoken, he shall crye to Jesu Christ at his laste daye, and scarcely wolle he herken him. And vnderstonde that this condition must haue four thynges.

Thy shrifte must be prouyded before and aryped, for wicked haste dothe no profyte, yf a man shryue hym of his synnes: be it of pryde, or enuy, and so forthe with the speces and circumstaunces of synne. And that he haue comprehended in his mynde the nombre & greatnesse of his synnes, and howe longe he hathe lyen in synne. And also that he hathe be contryte for his synnes, and in stedfaste purpose (by ỳ grace of god) neuer ayen to fal to synne. And also that he drede and counterfaite him selfe that he flye the occasion of synne, to whiche he is enclyned. Also thou shalte shryue the of all thy synnes to o man, and nat parte to o man and parte to another. That is to vnderstonde, in entent to departe thy confessyon for shame or drede, for it is but strangyng of thy soule. For certes Jesu Christe is entierly all good, in him nys none imperfection, and therfore ether he forgeueth al perfitely, or els neuer a deale. I saye nat that if thou be assygned to thy penytencer for certayne sinne that thou art bound to shewe him all ỳ remenaunt of thy synnes, of whyche thou hast be shryuen of thy curate, but yf it lyke to the of thy humilyte, this is no parte of thy shrifte. Ne I say not there as I speke of diuision of cõfessyon, that if thou haue lycence to shryue the to a discrete and an honest preest where the lyketh, & by lycence of thy curate, that thou ne mayeste well shryue the to hym of all thy synnes. Let no synne be vntolde as feere as thou haste remembraunce. And whan thou shalte be shriuen to thy curat, yet him all thy synnes ỳ thou hast do sythe thou were last shryuen. This is no wicked entent of diuision of shrifte.

Also the very shrifte asketh certayne condicions. Firste that thou shryue the by thy free wyll, nat constrayned for shame of folke, sykenesse, ne suche other thynges. For it is reason, that he that trespaceth by his free will, ỳ by his free wyll he confesse hys trespace, and that none other man tell his syn but himselfe, ne he shal nat nay ne deny his synne, ne wyth him ayenst the preest for amonesshyng hym to leaue his synne. The seconde condycion is

that

that thy shrift be lawful, that is to saye, that thou shryuest the. And also the preest that heareth thy confession be verely in ꝑ faithe of holy church, and that a man ne be not dispeyred of the mercy of Jesu Christ, as Cayn or Judas. And also a man must accuse hym selfe of hys own trespaces not another, but he shal blame and wyte hym selfe & hys own malyce of his synne, & none other: But natheless if that a nother man be occasion or entycer of his syn, or the estate of a parson be such by which his syn is agredged, or els ꝑ he may not plainely shryue him but he tel the parson with which he hath synned, than may he tel, so that his entencion be not to backbite the parson, but only to declare his confession. Thou ne shalte not also make no leasynges in thy confession for humilyte, parauenture to say that thou haste comysed and done suche synnes as of whiche that thou ne were neuer gylty. For sayne Augustyn sayethe, if that thou bycause of thyn humilite makest lesynges on thy self though thou were not in synne before, yet arte thou than in synne throughe thy leasynge. Thou muste also shewe thy syn by thyne owne proper mouth, but thou be dombe and not by no letter: for that thou hast done the shame, shalt haue the shame therfore. Thou shalte not eke payne thy confession with fayre subtell wordes, to couer the more thy synne: for than begylest thou thy selfe and nat the preeste, thou must tell it playne, be it neuer so foule ne horyble. Thou shalte also shryue the to a preest, that is discrete to counsaile the, and also thou shalt not shryue the for vayneglory, ne for ypocrisye, ne for no cause but onely for the loue & grace of Jesu Christe, and healt of thy soule. Thou shalt nat also ren to the preest sodaynly to tell hym lightly thy synne, as who sayth to tell a tale or a tale, but auysedly and with good deuocion: And generally shryue the ofte if thou ofte fall ofte aryse by confession. And though thou shryue the ofter than ones of the synne whiche thou hast be shryuen of, it is the more merite. And as sayth sayne Augustyne, thou shalt haue the more lightly forgyuenesse and grace of god, bothe of synne and payne. And certes ones a yere at leest, it is lawful to be housled for surely ones a yere al thinges renouellen. ¶ Nowe haue I tolde you of very confession, that is the .ii. part of penitence.

¶ Explicit secunda pars penitencie: Et sequitur tercia pars.

The thyrde parte of penytence is satisfaction, and that stont most generally in almesse dede and bodyly payne. Nowe ben there thre maner of almesse. Contrition of herte, where a man offereth hym selfe to god.

Another is, to haue pyte of defaute of hys neighboure. And the thirde is in yeuynge of good counsayle, goostly and bodely where as men haue nede, and namely in sustenaunce of mans fode. And take kepe ꝑ a man hath nede of these thinges generally, he hath nede of to be of clothing, & of herborowe: he hath nede of charitable counsayle, visityng in prisonne sickenesse, and sepulture of hys body. And if thou mayste nat visite the nedeful in the persone, visite hem with thy message & yiftes.

These ben generally the almesse & workes of charite, of hem that haue temporel richesse or discrecion in counsayling. Of these workes shalt thou here at the day of doome.

These almesse shalte thou do of thyne proper thinges, and hastely & prively if thou mayste: But natheless, if thou mayste nat do it prively, thou shalte not forbeare to doe almesse though men se it, so that it be not do for thanke of the worlde, but only for thanke of Jesu christ. For as witnesseth saint Barbe in Cap. v. A cite maye nat be hydde that is sette on a mountayne, ne men lyghte nat a laterne to put it vnder a bushell, but sette it vpon a candilsticke to yeue light to men in the house. Right so shul your lyghte, lighte before men, that they may se your good workes, and glorifye our father that is in heuen.

Nowe as to speke of bodily payne, it stoute in prayers, waking, fastynge, vertuous teachynge of orisons. And ye shall vnderstande, that orisons, or prayers, is to saye, a pyteous wyl of herte, that settereth it in god, and expresseth by worde our ward to remeue harmes, & haue thinges spirituel and perdurable, & sometyme temporell thinges. Of whiche orisons certes in the orison of the pater noster: hath Jesu Christ enclosed moost thinges. Certes it is priuileged of thre thinges in his dignite for which it is more digne than any other prayer, for that Jesu Christe him selfe made it, & it is shorte, for it shulde be lerned ꝑ more lighe

ly, & to holde it the more easy in hert, & helpe him self the ofter with that orison: And for a man shulde be the lesse wery to saye it, & nat excuse hym to lerne it, it is so shorte and easy: and for it cõprehendeth in it self al good prayers. The exposicion of this holy prayer that is so excellent and digne, I referre to the maisters of theology, saue thus much woll I say that whan thou prayest, that god shulde forgyue the thy offẽces, as thou forgyuest hem that haue offended the: Be well ware that thou be nat out of charyte. This holye orison amynysheth also venyall synne, and therfore it appertayneth specially to penitence.

This prayer must be trewly said and in parfyte faith, and that men praye to god ordinatlye, discretely, and deuoutlye, and alwaye a man shal put his wyll to be subiect to ỳ wyll of god. This orison muste also be sayde with great humblesse and full pure and honestely, and not to the anoyaunce of any man or woman. It muste also be continewed with the workes of charite. It auayleth also ayenst the vices of the soule: For as saith the saint Jerome: By fastynge ben saued the vices of the flesshe, and by prayer the vices of the soule.

After this thou shalt vnderstonde, that bodely prayer stont in waking. For Jesu Christ saith: Wake ye and praye, that ye ne entre in to wicked temptacion. Ye shull vnderstonde also, that fastynge stonte in thre thynges: In forberyng of bodely meate and drinke, in forberynge of wordly solyte, and in forberynge of deedly synne: this is to saye, that a man shall kepe hym fro deedly sinne with al his might.

And thou shalte vnderstonde also that god ordayned fastynge, and to fastynge partayneth four thinges. Largenesse to poore folke, Gladnesse of herte spirituel: nat to be angry ne anoyed, ne grutche for he fasteth, and also resonable hour to eate by measure, that is to saye, a man shal nat eate in vntyme, ne sytte the lenger at the table for he fasteth.

Than shalt thou vnderstonde, that bodely payne stont in disciplyne or teachyng by worde or writinge, or by ensample. Also in wearynge of heer or stamyn, or of habergeons on her naked fleache for Christes sake, and that suche maner penaunces, ne make nat thyne herte bytter or angrye, ne anoyed of thy self for better is to cast away thyne heer, than to cast awaye the swetnesse of Jesu Christ. And therfore saythe saynt Poule: Clothe you, as they that ben chosen of god in herte, of miserecorde, debonairte, suffraunce, and suche maner of clothing, of which Jesu Christ is more pleased, than with heeres or habergeons.

Than is disciplyne also in knockynge of thy brest, in scourging with roddes, in kneelinge, in tribulation, in suffringe pacientlye wrõges that ben done to the, & also in pacient suffring of sickenesse, or lesyng of worldely goodes or catell, or wife, chylde, or other frendes.

Than shalt thou vnderstonde which thynges disstourbe penaunce, and that is in foure maners, drede, shame, hope, & wanhope, that is disperacion. And for to speke first of drede for whiche he weneth that he maye suffer no penaunce. There ayenste is remedye for to thynke that bodely penaunce is but shorte and lytel, at regarde of the payne of hell that is so cruel & so longe, that it lasteth without ende.

Nowe ayenst the shame that a man hath to shriue hym, and namely these ypocrites that wolde be holde so parfyte, that they haue no nede to shriue hem. Ayenst that shame should a man thynke that by waye of reason that he that hathe nat be ashamed to do foule thynges, certes hym ought not be ashamed for to do fayre thinges, and that is confessions.

A man shulde also thinke that god seeth and knoweth all his thoughtes and all his werkes: To hym maye nothynge be hyde ne couered. Men shulde also remembre hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome to hem that be nat penitent & shriuen in this presente life: For all the creatures in erth and in hell shal se apertly, all ỳ they hydde in this worlde. Nowe for to speke of the hope of hem that ben so negligente & slowe to shryue hem: that stondeth in two maners. That one is, that he hopeth for to lyue longe, and for to purchase muche rychesse for hys delyte, and than he wol shriue hym: And as he sayth, him semeth than timely ynough to come to shrift. Another is of surquidrie that he hath in christes mercye. Ayenst the firste vyce he shall thynke that oure lyfe is in no sykernesse, and also that all the rychesses in this worlde ben in aduenture, and passe as a shadowe on the wall. And as sayth saynt Gregorie, that it appartayneth to the great rightwisenesse of god, that neuer shall the payne stynte of hem that neuer wolde withdrawe hem fro synne her thankes, but euer continued in synne: for that perpetual wyll to do syn, shall they haue

perpetual

perpetuall payne. Wanhope is in two maners. The first wãhope is in ỳ mercy of god. That other is that they thynke that they ne might not longe persever in goodnesse. The first wanhope cometh of that he demeth that he hath synned so greatly and so ofte, and so longe lyen in synne that he shall not be saued. Ayens that cursed wanhope shuld he thinke that the passion of Jesu Christ is more strenge for to vnbynde than synne is stronge for to bynde. Ayenst the seconde wanhope he shal thinke that as often as he falleth he may ryse agayne by penitence: and thoughe he neuer so longe hath lyen in synne, the mercye of Christ is alway redy to receiue him to mercy. Ayenst ỳ wanhope that he demeth he shulde not long persever in goodnesse, he shal thinke that the feblenesse of the dyuel may nothinge do but if men wol suffre him, and also he shall haue strength of the helpe of Jesu Christ and of all holy churche, and the protection of angels if him lyste.

Than shall men vnderstonde what is the fruyte of penaunce. and after the wordes of Jesu Christe, it is endelesse blisse of heuen. There ioye hath neuer ende, no contrarite of wone greuaunce: ther al harmes been passed of this present lyfe, there as is the syckernesse fro the payne of hell, there as is the blisful cõpany that reioyce hem euer mo, eurriche of others ioye: there as the body of man that sõtyme was foule and derke, is more clere than the sunne: ther as ỳ body that somtyme was sicke, freyle, and feble, and mortal, is immortall, and so stronge a hole, that there ne may nothynge appeyre it: there as is neither hunger, thrust, ne colde, but euery soule replenished with ỳ sight of the parfyte knowyng of god. This blisful reigne may men purchace by pouerte espirituel, and the glorye by lowenesse, the plente of ioye by hunger and thrust, and the rest by trauayle, and the life by deth and mortification of synne: to whiche life he vs bringe, that bought vs with his precious blode. Amen.

Here endeth the Persons tale.

Thus endeth the boke of Caunterbury tales. And hereafter followeth the Romaunt of the Rose.

The Romaũt of the Role.

MAny men sayn that in
swevenings
Ther nys but fables
and lesynges
But men maye some
swevens sene
Whiche hardely that
false ne bene
But afterwarde ben apparaunt
This maye I dralwe to warraunt
In authour, that hight Macrobes
That halte not dremes false ne lees
But vndoth vs the avisioun
That whilom mette kyng Cipioun
And who so saith, or weneth it be
Iape, or els nycete
To wene that dremes after fal
Let who so lyste a fole me cal
For this trowe I, and say for me
That dremes signifyaunce be
Of good and harme to many wightes
That dremen in her slepe a nyghtes
full many thynges couertly
That fallen after all openly
Within my twenty yere of age
Whan that loue taketh his corage
Of yonge folke, I went soone
To bed, as I was wont to done
And fast I slepte, and in slepyng
Me mette suche a swevenyng
That lyked me wonders wele
But in that swevenis neuer a dele
That it nys afterwarde befal
Right as this dreme wol tel vs al.
Nowe this dreme wol I ryme a ryght
To make your hertes gay and lyght
For loue it prayeth, and also
Commaundeth me that it be so
And if there any aske me
Whether that it be, he or she
Howe this booke, which is here
Shal hate, that I rede you here
It is the Romaunte of the Rose
In whiche all the arte of loue I close.
¶ The matere fayre is of to make
God graunt me in gree that she it take
For whom that it begonnen is
And that is she, that hath ywis
So mokell prise, and therto she
So worthy is beloued to be
That she well ought of pryse and ryght
Be cleped Rose of euery wight
That it was May me thought tho
It is fyue yere or more ago
That it was May, thus dremed me
In tyme of loue and iolyte
That al thynge gynneth waxen gay
For there is neither buske nor hay
In May, that it nyll shroubed bene
And it with newe leues wrene
These woddes eke recoueren grene
That drye in wynter ben to sene
And the erth wexeth proude withall
For swote dewes that on it fall
And the poore estate forgette
In whiche that winter had it sette
And than become the grounde so proude
That it wol haue a newe shroude
And maketh so queynt his robe and fayre
That it had hewes an hundred payre
Of grasse and flowres, inde and pers
And many hewes ful divers
That is the robe I mene twys
Through which the ground to praisen is
The bryddes that han left her songe
While they han suffred colde ful stronge
In wethers grylle, and derke to sight
Ben in May, for the sonne bright
So glad, that they lewe in syngyng
That in her hert is suche lykyng
That they mote syngen and ben lyght
Than dothe the nightyngale her myght
To maken noyse, and syngen blythe
Than is blysful many a sythe
The chelaundre, and the popyngay
Than yonge folke entenden aye
For to ben gave and amerous
The tyme is than so sauourous
Hardé is his herte that loueth nought
In May, whan al this myrthe is wrought
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smale bryddes syngen clere
Her blysful swete songe pytous
And in this seson delytous
Whan loue affirmeth al thyng
Me thought one nyght, in my slepyng
Right in my bed, ful redyly
That it was by the morowe erly
And vp I rose, and gan me clothe
Anon I wysshe myne hondes bothe
A fyluer nedyl forth I droughe
Out of an aguyler queynt ynowe
And gan this nedyl threde anone
For out of towne me lyste to gone
The sowne of bryddes for to here
That on the buskes syngen clere

That in the swete season that lefe is
With a threde bastynge my sleuys
Alone I went in my playing
The smale fowles songe herkenyng
That payned hem ful many a payre
To synge on bowes blossomed fayre
Jolyfe and gaye, full of gladnesse
Towarde a ryuer gan I me dresse
That I herde renne fast by
For fayrer playen none saugh I
Than playen me by that ryuere
For from an hyll that stode there nere
Come downe the streme full styffe & bold
Clere was the water, and as cold
As any welle is, sothe to sayne
And somdele lasse it was than Sayne
But it was drayter, wele away
And neuer saugh I er that daye
The water that so wele lyked me
And wonder glad was I to se
That lusty place, and that ryuere
And with that water that ran so clere
My face I wysshe, tho sawe I wele
The botome ypaued euerydele
With gravel, ful of stones shene
The medowes softe, sote, and grene
Beet right on the water syde
Ful clere was than the morowe tyde
And ful attempre out of drede
Tho gan I walken thorowe the Mede
Downwarde aye in my playeng
The ryuers syde coostying.
And whan I had a while ygone
I sawe a Garden ryght anone
Ful long and brode, and euerydele
Enclosed was, and walled wele
With hye wales enbatayled
Portrayed without, and wel entayled
With many ryche portreytures
And both yer ymages and peyntures
Gan I beholde besely
And I wol tel you redely
Of thylke ymages the semblaunce
As ferre as I haue remembraunce.
¶ Amydde sawe I hate stonde
That for her wrathe and yre, and onde
Semed to be a mynoresse
An angry wight a chidestresse
And ful of gyle, and fell corage
By semblaunt was that vyle ymage
And she was nothyng wele arayde
But lyke a wode woman afrayde
Yfrounced foule was her vysage
And grymmyng for dispitous rage
Her nose snorted vp for tene
Ful hydous was she for to sene
Ful foule and rusty was she this
Her heed ywithen was ywis
Ful grymly with a great towayle.
¶ Anymage of another entayle
Ilyke halfe was her fast by
Her name aboue her heed sawe I
And she was called Felony
¶ Another ymage that Tyrlany
Ycleped was, sawe I and fonde
Upon the wall on her ryght honde
Tyrlany was lyke somdele
That other ymage, and trusteth wele
She semed a wicked creature
By countenaunce in portreyture
She semed be full dispytous
And eke ful proude, and outragious
As I coude be payne I vndertake
That such an ymage coude make
Ful foule and chorlych semed she
And eke villeynous for to be
And lytel coulde of norture
To worshippe any creature.
¶ And nexte was paynted Coueytse
That eggeth folke in many a gyse
To take and vene right nought agayne
And great treasours vp to layne
And that is she, that for vsure
Leneth to many a creature
The lasse for the more wynnyng
So coueytous is her byrnyng
And that is she for pennes feele
That techeth for to robbe and steele
These theues, and these smale harlotes
And that is routhe, for by her throtes
Ful many one hongeth at the last
She maketh folke compasse and cast
To taken other folkes thyng
Through robbery, or myscouetyng
And that is she that maketh trechours
And she maketh false pledours
That with her termes and her domes
Done maidens, children, and eke gromes
Her heritage to forgo
Ful croked were her hondes two
For coueytyse is euer wode
To gripen other folkes goode
Coueytyse, for her wynnyng
Ful lefe hath other mennes thyng
¶ Another ymage set saugh I
Nexte Coueytyse fast by

And

And she was cleped Auarice
Ful foule in payntyng was that vice
Ful sad and caytife was she eke
And also grene as any leke
So yuel hewed was her coloure
Her semed to haue lyued in langoure
She was lyke thyng for hunger deed
That lad her lyfe onely by breed
Kneden with eysel strong and egre
And therto she was leane and megre
And she was clad ful poorely
Al in an olde roine courtpy
As she were all with dogges torne
And both behynde and eke before
Clouted was she beggerly
Amantel honge her fast by
Upon a benche weyke and smal
A burnette cote honge there with al
Furred with no menyuere
But with a furre rough of heere
Of lambe skynnes heuy and blacke
It was full olde I vnder take
For Auarice to clothe her wele
Me hasteth her neuer a dele
For certaynly it were her lothe
To wearen of that vlke clothe
And if it were forweared, she
Wolde haue ful great nyeede
Of clothyng, er she bought her newe
Al were it bad of wol and hewe
This Auarice helde in her hande
A purse that honge by a bande
And that she hyd and bonde so stronge
Men must abyde wonder longe
Ere out of the purse er there come ought
For that ne cometh in her thought
It was not certaine her entent
That fro that purse a peny went
And by that ymage nygh ynough
Was paynted Enuy that euer lough
For neuer wel in her herte ferde
But if she eyther sawe or herde
Some great mischaunce, or gret disese
Nothyng may so much her plese
As myschefe and misauenture
Or whan she seeth discomfyture
Upon any worthy man fall
Than lyketh her wel withall
She is ful glad in her corage
Yf she se any great lynage
Be brought to naught, in shamful wyse
And if a man in honour ryse
Or by hys wyt, or by hys prowesse
Of that hath she great heuynesse
For trusteth well she goth nye wood
Whan any chaunce hapeth good
Enuye is of suche cruelte
That fayth ne trouth holdeth she
To frende ne felowe, badde or good
Ne she hath kynne none of her blood
That she nys ful her enemy
She nolde, I dare sayne hardely
Her owne father fared wele
And sore abyeth she euery dele
Her malyce, and her male talent
For she is in so great turment
And hate suche, whan folke doth good
That nyghe she melteth for pure wood
Her herte kerueth and so bresteth
That god the people wel awreketh
Enuy twys shall neuer let
Some blame vpon the folke to set
I trowe that if Enuye wys
Knewe the best man that is
On thys syde or beyonde the see
Yet somwhat lacken him wold she
And if he were so hende and wyse
That she ne might all abate hys prise
Yet wolde she blame his worthynesse
Or by her wordes make it lesse
I sawe Enuye in that paynting
Had a wonderful lokyng
For she ne loked but awrye
Or ouerthwarte, all baggyngly
And she had a foule vsage
She myght loke in no vysage
Of man ne woman, forth ryght playne
But shette her one eye for dysdayne
So for enuye brenned she
Whan she might any man se
That fayre, or worthy were, or wyse
Or els rode in folkes prise
¶ Sorowe was paynted nere Enuye
Upon that wal of maseurye
But wel was sene in her colour
That she had lyued in langour
Her semed to haue the iaundice
Not halfe so pale was Auarice
Ne nothyng lyke of feancelle
For sorowe, thought, and great distresse
That she had suffred day and nyght
Made her yelowe, and nothynge bryght
Ful fade, pale, and megre also
Was neuer wyght yet halfe so wo
As that her semed for to be
Nor so fulfylled with vre, as she

Ran. I trow

I trow that no wight might her plese
Nor do that thing that might her ese
Nor she ne wolde her sorowe slake
Nor comforte none vnto her take
So depe was her wo begonne
And eke her hert in angre ronne
A sorowful thyng well semed she
Nor she had nothyng slowe be
For to cratchen al her face
And for to rent in many place
Her clothes, and for to teare her swyre
As she that was fulfylled of yre
And all to torne lay eke her heere
Aboute her shulders, here and there
As she that had it all to rent
For angre and for male talent
And eke I tell you certaynly
How that she wepte full tenderly
In world nis wight so harde of herte
That had sene her sorowes smerte
That nolde haue had of her pyte
So wo begon a thyng was she
She al to dasht her selfe for wo
And smote togyder her hondes two
To sorowe was she ful ententyfe
That woful rechelesse caytyfe
Her rought lytle of playeng
Or of clypping or kyssyng
For who so sorowful is in herte
Him lust not to play ne sterte
Ne for to daunce, ne to synge
Ne may his hert in temper brynge
To make ioye on eurn or morowe
For wo is contrary vnto sorowe.

¶ Elde was paynted after this
That shorter was a foote iwys
Than she was wonte in her yonghede
Vnneth her selfe she myght fede
So feble and eke so olde was she
That faded was al her beaute
Ful salowe was waxen her colour
Her heed for hoore was whyte as flour
Iwys great qualme ne were it none
Ne synne, although her lyfe were gone
All worn was her body vnwelde
And drie and dwyned al for elde
A foule forwelked thinge was she
That whilom rounde and softe had be
Her heeres shoken fast withall
As from her heed they wolde fall
Her face frounced and forpyned
And bothe her hondes lorne fordwyned
So olde she was, that she ne went
A foote, but it were by potent
The tyme that passeth nyght and daye
And restlesse trauayleth aye
And steleth from vs so priuely
That to vs semeth sykerly
That it in one poynt dwelleth euer
And certes it ne resteth neuer
But goth so faste, and passeth aye
That there nys man that thinke may
What tyme that nowe present is
Asketh at these clerkes this
For men thynke it redily
Thre tymes ben passed by
The tyme that may not soiourne
But goth, and may neuer retourne
As water that downe renneth aye
But neuer droppe retourne maye
There may nothynge as tyme endure
Metal, nor erthly creature
For all thynge is frette and shal
The tyme eke that chaungeth al
And al doth ware, and fostred be
And al thynge distroyeth he
The tyme that eldeth our auncestours
And eldeth kynges and emperours
And that vs all shall ouercomen
Er that deth vs shall haue nomen
The tyme that hath all in welde
To elden folke had made her elde
So inly, that to my wetyng
She myght helpe her selfe nothyng
But turned ayen vnto childhede
She had nothynge her selfe to lede
Ne wytte ne pythe in her holde
More than a childe of two yere olde
But natheles I trowe that she
Was fayre somtyme, and freshe to se
When she was in her ryghtfull age
But she was past all that passage
And was a doted thyng becomen
A furred cappe on had she nomen
Wel had she clad her selfe and warme
For colde myght els done her harme
These olde folke haue alway colde
Her kynde is suche, whan they ben olde.

¶ Another thyng was don ther wit
That semed lyke an Ipocryt
And it was cleped Pope holy
That like is she, that priuely
Ne spareth neuer a wycked dede
Whan men of her taken none hede
And maketh her outwarde precyous
With pale vysage and pytous

And

And semeth a simple creature
But there nis no misaventure
That she ne thynketh in her corage
Ful lyke to her was thilke image
That maked was lyke her semblaunce
She was ful simple of countenaunce
And she was clothed and eke shod
As she were for the loue of god
Yolden to religion
Suche semed her deuocion
I psaulter helde she fast in honde
And besyly she gan to fonde
To make many a fayne prayere
To god, and to his sayntes dere
As she was gaye, fresh, ne iolyfe
But semed to be ful ententyfe
To good werkes, and to fayre
And therto she had on an hayre
Ne certes she was fatte nothyng
But semed wery for fastyng
Of colour pale and deed was she
From her the gates aye warned be
Of paradise, that blysfull place
For suche folke maken leane her grace
As Christ sayth in hys Euangyle
To gette hem prise in town a whyle
And for a lytell glorye beigne
They lesen god and eke his reygne.
And alderlast of euerychone
Was paynted Pouert al alone
That not a peny had in holde
Although she her clothes solde
And though she shulde an honged be
For naked as a worme was she
And if the wether stormy were
For colde she shulde haue dyed there
She ne had on but a strayte olde sacke
And many a clout on it there stacke
This was her cote, and her mantele
No more was ther neuer a dele
To clothe her with, I vndertake
Great leaser had she to quake
And she was put, that I of talke
Ferre fro these other, vp in an halke
There lurked, and there coured she
For poore thyng where so it be
As shamefaste, and dispysed aye
Cursed may wel be that daye
That poore man conceyued is
For god wote al to selde ywis
As any poore man wel yfedde
Or wel arayed or ycledde
Or wel beloued, in suche wyse
In honour, that he maye aryse.
¶ Al these thynges well auysed
As I haue you er this deuised
With golde and asure ouer all
Depaynted were vpon the wall
Square was the wall, and high lombele
Enclosed, and ybarred wele
In stede of hegge, was that gardin
Come neuer shepherde therin
In to that gardyn, wel wrought
Who so that me couldе haue brought
By ladders, or els by degre
It wolde well haue lyked me
For suche solace, suche ioye, and play
I trowe that neuer man ne sey
As was in that place delicious
The gardyn was not daungerous
To herborowe birdes many one
So riche a yere was neuer none
Of birdes songe, and braunches grene
Therin were birdes mo I wene
Than ben in al the realme of Fraunce
Ful blysfull was the accordaunce
Of swete perous songe they made
For al this worlde it ought glade
And I my selfe so mery ferde
When I her blisful songes herde
That for an hundred pounde wolde I
If that the passage openly
Had be vnto me free
That I nolde entren for to se
Thassemble, god kepe it fro care
Of birdes, whiche therein ware
That songen through her mery throtes
Daunces of loue, and mery notes.

When I thus herde foules synge
I fel faste in a wayment eyng
By whiche arte, or by what engyn
I might come in to that gardyn
But way I couthe fynde none
Into that gardyn for to gone
Ne nought wyst I if that there were
Other hole or place where
By whiche I might haue entre
As there was none to teche me
For I was al alone ywis
For wo and anguyshe of this
Tyl at laste bethought I me
That by no way ne might it be
That there nas ladder ne way to pace
Or hole, in to so fayre a place
Tho gan I go a ful great paas

Enuyron, euen in compas
The closyng of the square wall
Tyl that I founde a wycket small
So shette, that I ne might in gone
And other entre was there none.

Upon this doze I gan to smyte
That was feirs, and so lyte
For other waye could I not seke
Ful long I stode, and knocked eke
And stode ful long al herkening
Yf that I herde any wight comyng
Tyl that the doze of thilke entre
A mayden curteys opened me
Her herte was as yelow of the we
As any basen scoured newe
Her flesshe tender as is a chyke
With brent browes, smothe and slyke
And by mesure large were
The openyng of her eyen clere
Her nose of good proporcyon
Her eyen gray, as is a faucon
With swete breth, and wel sauoured
Her face white, and wel coloured
With lyttel mouth and rounde to se
A cloue chynne eke had she
Her necke was of good fassyon
In length and greatnesse by reson
Without bleyne, scabbe, or royne
Fro Hierusalem vnto Burgoyne
There nys a fayrer necke twys
To fele how smothe and softe it is
Her throte also white of he we
As snowe on braunce snowed newe
Of body ful wel wrought was she
Men neden not in no countre
A fayrer body for to seke
And of fyne Orfrays had she eke
A chapelet, so semely on
As neuer were mayde vpon
And fayre aboue that chapelet
A rose garlande had she set
She had a gay mirrour
And with a riche golde tresour
Her hed was tressed queyntly
Her sleues sewed fetously
And for to kepe her hondes fayre
Of gloues white she had a payre
And she had on a cote of grene
Of clouth of Gaunt, withouten wene
Wel semed by her apparayle
She was not wont to great trauayle
For whan she kempt was fetously
And wel arayed and rychely
Thanhad she done al her iournee
For mery and wel begon was she
She ladde a lusty lyfe in May
She had no thought, by nyght ne day
Of nothyng, but if it were onely
To grayeth her wel and vncouthly.

Whan that this doze had opened me
This May, semely for to se
I thonked her as I best myght
And asked her howe that she hyght
And what she was, I asked eke
And to me was nought vnmeke
Ne of her answere daungerous
But fayre answerde, and sayd thus
Lo sir, my name is Idelnesse
So clepe men me, more and lesse
Ful mighty and ful ryche am I
And that of one thynge namely
For I entende to nothyng
But to my ioy, and my playeng
And for to kembe and tresse me
I quaynted am I and prime
With Mirthe, lorde of this garden
That fro the lande of Alexandrine
Made the trees hyther be fette
That in this gardyne ben ysette
And when the trees were woxen an hight
This wall, that stante here in thy syght
Dyd Mirthe enclosen al aboute
And these vmages al withoute
He dyd hem bothe entayle and payate
That neyther ben to lyte ne quaynte
But they been full of sorowe and wo
As thou hast seue a whyle ago.

And ofte tyme hym to solace
Sir Mirthe cometh in to this place
And eke with hym cometh his meyne
That ben ful in luste and to leyse
And nowe is Mirthe therin, to here
The brides howe they syngen clere
The mauis and the nyghtyngale
And other ioly brides smale
And thus he walketh to solace
Hym and his folke, for swetter place
To playen in, he may not fynde
Al though he sought one in tyl Inde
The al ther fayrest folke to se
That in this worlde may founde be
Hath Mirth with hym in his route
That folowen hym al wayes aboute

Whan Idelnesse had tolde al this
And I had harkened wel y wis
Than sayde I to dame Idelnesse
Nowe also wisly god me blesse
Syth Myrthe, that is so fayre and fre
Is in this yerde, with his meyne
Fro thylke assemble, yf I may
Shal no man werne me to day
That I this night ne come it se
For wel wene I there with him be
In fayre and ioly companye
Fulfylled of al curtesye
And fourth without wordes mo
In at the wicket went I tho
That Idelnesse had opened me
Into that gardyn fayre to se.

And whan I was in wis
Ywherre was ful glad of this
For wel wende I ful sykerly
Have ben in paradise erthly
So fayre it was, that trusteth wel
It semed a place espirituell
For certes as at my devyse
There is no place in paradyse
So good in for to dwell or be
As in that gardyn thought me
For there was many a birde singyng
Throughout the yerde al thringyng
In many places were nightyngales
Popes, fynches, and wodwales
That in her swete songe delyten
In thilke places as they habyten
There might men se many flockes
Of turtels and lauerockes
Chalaundres fete fawe I there
That were nyghe forsongen were
And thrustels, wrennes, and maurle
That songen for to winne hem prise
And eke to surmount in her songe
That other brydes hem amonge
Of note made fayre servyse
These birdes, that I you devyse
They songe her songe, as fayre and wel
As angels done espirituel
And trusteth me, whan I hem herde
Ful lustly and wel I ferde
For neuer yet suche melodye
Was herde, of man that myght dye
Suche swete songe was hem amonge
That me thought it no birdes songe
But it was wonder lyke to be
Songe of Syrenes of the se
That for her synging is so clere
Though we mermaydens clepe hem here
In englishe, as is our vsaunce
Men clepe hem Sereyns in Fraunce

Attentyfe weren for to synge
These brydes, that not vnkonnyng
Were of her crafte, and a prentyse
But of songe subtyl and wyse
And certes, whan I herde her songe
And sawe the greene place amonge
In herte I wexe so wonder gay
That I was neuer erst, er that day
So tolyfe, nor so wel bygo
As merry in herte, as I was tho
And than wyst I, and sawe ful wel
That ydelnesse me serued wel
That me put in suche tolyfe
Her frende well ought I for to be
Syth she for the doze of that gardyn
Had opened and me lette in.

From hence forth, howe that I wrought
I shal you telle, as me thought
Fyrst vnderfot Myrthe serued ther
And eke what folke there with him were
Withoute fable I wol discrive
And of that gardyn eke as blive
I wol you tellen after this
The fayre fashion al ywis
That wel wrought was for the nones
I may not tell you all at ones
But as I may and can, I shall
By ordre tellen you it all
Ful fayre seruice, and eke ful swete
These birdes maden as they sete
Layes of loue, ful wel sownyng
They songen in her syngynge
Some hye, and some eke lowe songe
Upon the braunches grene vspronge
The swetenesse of her melodye
Made al myn herte in reuerye
And whan that I herd I trowe
These birdes synging on a rowe
Than might I not withholde me
That I ne wente in for to se
Sir Myrthe, for my desiryng
Was him to serue ouer al thyng
His countenaunce and his manere
That syght was to me ful dere.

Tho went I forth on my right hōde
Downe by a lytel path I fonde

Of

Of myntes ful, and fenell greene
And fast by without weene
Sir Wrythe I founde, and right anon
Unto sir Wrythe gan I gon
There as he was hym to solace
And with hym, in that lusty place
So fayre folke and so freshe had he
That whan I sawe, I wondred me
Fro whence such folke might come
So fayre they weren al and some
For they were lyke, as to my syght
To angels, that been fethered bryght.
These folke, of whiche I tell you so
Upon a karole wenten tho
A lady karoled hem, that hyght
Gladnesse, blysfull and lyght
Well couthe she synge and lustely
None halfe so wel and semely
And couth make in songe such refraining
It sate her wonder well to synge
Her voyce full clere was and ful swete
She was not rude ne unmete
But couthe ynough of such doing
As longeth unto karollyng
For she was wont in every place
To syngen first, folke to solace
For syngyng moste she gaue her to
No crafte had she so lefe to do.

Tho myghtest thou karolles sene
And folke daunce and mery bene
And made many a fayre turnynge
Upon the grene grasse spryngynge
There myghtest thou se these flutours
Wynstrales and eke iogloures
That well to synge dyd her payne
Some songe songes of Lorayne
For in Lorayne her notes be
Full sweter than in this countre
There was manye a tymbestere
And saylours, that I dare wel swere
Couthe her crafte full parfytly
The tymbres up full subtelly
They caste, and hent full ofte
Upon a fynger fayre and softe
That they fayled neuer mo
Ful ferys damosels two
Right yonge, and ful of semelyhede
In kyrtels, and none other wede
And fayre tressed euery tresse
Had Wrythe done for hys noblesse
Amydde the carole for to daunce
But herof lyeth no remembraunce
Howe that they daunsed queyntly
That one wolde come all prively
Ayen that other, and whan they were
Togither almoste, they threwe yfere
Her mouthes so, that through her play
It semed as they kyste alway
So daunsen wel couthe they the gyse
What shoulde I more to you deuyse
Ne bode I neuer thence go
Whyles that I sawe hem daunce so
Upon the karoll wonder faste
I gan beholde, tyll at laste
I lady gan me for to espye
And she was cleped Curtesye
The worshypfull, the debonayre
I pray to god euer fall her fayre
Ful Curtesly she called me
What do ye ther Beau sire (qd she)
Come, and yf it lyke you
To daunsen, daunseth with vs nowe
And I without taryeng
Went in to the karolyng
I was abashed neuer a dele
But it to me lyked ryght wele
That Curtesye me cleped so
And bade me on the daunce go
For if I had durste certayne
I wolde haue karolled ryght fayne
As man that was to daunce ryght blythe
Than gan I loken ofte sythe
The shap, the bodyes, and the chere
The countenaunce and the maneres
Of al the folke that daunced there
And I shal tell what they were.

Ful fayre was Wrythe, ful longe and high
A fayrer man I neuer sygh
As rounde as aple was hys face
Ful roddy and whyte in euery place
Feyre he was and wel besey
With meetely mouthe, and eyen grey
His nose by mesure wrought ful right
Crispe was his heere, and eke ful bryght
His shulders of large brede
And smalyche in the gyrdelstede
He semed lyke a purtreyture
So noble he was of hys stature
So fayre, so joly, and so feetyse
With lymmes wrought at poynt deuyse
Delyuer, sinewy, and of great myght
Ne sawe thou neuer man so lyght
Of berde vneth had he nothyng
For it was in the first spryng

Ful yonge he was, and mery of thought
And in samette, with brides wrought
And with golde beten full fetously
His body was clad full tychely
Wrought was hys robe in straunge gyse
And al to slytted for queyntyse
In many a place, lowe and hye
And shode he was with great maistrye
With shone decoped, and with lace
By drury, and by solace
His leefe a rosen chapelet
Had made, and on his heed it set
And were ye who was hys lefe
Dame Gladenesse there was hym soleke
That syngeth so well with glad corage
That from she was twelue yere of age
She of her loue graunte hym made
Sir Myrth her by the fynger hade
Daunsyng, and she hym also
Great loue was a twixt hem two
Rothe wer they fayre and bright of hewe
She semed lyke a rose newe
Of colours, and her flesche so tender
That with a brere smale and tender
Men might it cleue, I dare wel sey
Her forheed frounceles al pley
Bent were her browes two
Her eyen grave, and glad also
That laughe den aye in her semblaunt
Full of the mouthe by couenaunt
I wot not what of her nose I shal di-
So fayre hath no woman a lyue (scrive
Her heere was yelowe, and clere shynyng
I wot no lady so lykyng
Of Oxtrayes freshe, was her garlande
I whiche sene haue a thousande
Sawe neuer ywis no garlande yet
So wel wrought of sylke as it
And in an ouer gylte samyte
Clad de she was, by great delyte
Of whiche her leefe a robe werde
The meryer she in her herte ferde
And nere her went, on her other syde
The god of loue, that can deuyde
Loue, and as hym lyketh it be
But he can cheries daunten, he
And maken folkes pryde fallen
And he can wel these lordes thrallen
And ladyes put at lowe degre
When he may hem to proude se.

This god of loue of his fascon
Was lyke no knaue, ne quistron
His beautie greatly was to prise
But of his robe to deuyse
I drede encombred for to be
For not yeladde in sylke was he
But al in floures and flourettes
Ypayned all with amorettes
And with losenges and scochons
With bridles, lybardes, and lyons
And other beestes wrought ful wele
His garment was euery dele
Ypurtrayed and ywrought with flourys
By dyuers medelyng of colours
Floures there were of many gyse
Yset by compace in a syse
There lacked no floure to my dome
Ne not so muche as floure of broome
Ne violet, ne eke peruynke
Ne floure none, that men can on thynke
And many a rose lefe ful longe
Was entermedled there amonge
And also on his hed was set
Of roses red a chapelet
But nyghtyngales a full great route
That flyen ouer his hed aboute
The leaues feden as they flyen
And he was all with bridles wryen
With popyngay, with nyghtyngale
With chalaundre, and with wodewale
With fynche, with larke, and archangell
He semed as he were an angell
That downe were comen fro heuen clere
Loue had with hym a bacheler
That he made alwayes with hym be
Swete Loking, cleped was he
This bacheler stode beholdyng
The daunce, and in hys honde holdyng
Turke bowes two, ful well deuyled had
That one of hem was of a tree
That beareth a fruit of fauour wicke
Ful croked was that foule sticke
And knotty here and there also
And blacke as bery, or any slo
That other bowe was of a plante
Without wemme, I dare warante
Ful euen and by proporcyon
Trete a longe, of ful good facyon
And it was payned wel and entytten
And ouer al dyapred and wrytten
With ladyes and with bacheleres
Ful lyghtsome and glad of cheres
These bowes two held Swete Loking
That semed lyke no gadeling
And ten brode arowes beide he there

Of whiche fyue in hys honde were
But they were shauen wel and dyght
Nocked and fethered aryght
And al they were with golde degon
And stronge poynted euerychone
And sharpe for to kerue wele
But yron was there none ne stele
For all was golde, men myght se
Out take the fethers and the tre

The swiftest of these arowes fyue
Out of a bowe for to dryue
And best fethered for to flye
And fayrest eke was cleped Beautie
That other arowe that hurteth lesse
Was cleped as I trowe Symplesse
The thirde cleped was Franchyse
That fethered was in noble wyse
With valour and with curtesye
The fourth was cleped companye
That heuy for to shoten is
But whoso shooteth right iwis
May therwith don great harme and wo
The fifte of these, and laste also
Fayre Semblaunt men that arowe call
The lest greuous of hem all
Yet can it make a full great wounde
But he may hope hys sores sounde
That hurte is with that arowe ywis
Lys wo the bette bestowed is
For he may soner haue gladnesse
Hys langour ought be the lesse.

Fyue arowes were of other gyse
That ben ful foule to deuyse
For shafte and ende sothe for to tell
Were also blacke as fende in hell
The firste of hem is called Pryde
That other arowe nexte hym besyde
It was cleped Vylanye
That arowe was, as with felonye
Enuenymed, and with spytous blame
The thirde of hem was cleped Shame
The fourthe Manhope cleped is
The fifte the Newe thought ywis

These arowes that I speke of here
Were all fyue on one maniere
And all were they resemblable
To hem was wel syttyng and able
The foule croked bowe hydous
That knotty was, and al roynous
That bowe semed wel to shete
The arowes fyue, that ben vnmete
And contrary to that other fyue
But though I tell not as blyue
Of her power, ne of her myght
Hereafter shal I tellen right
The sothe, and eke syguifiaunce
As ferre as I haue remembraunce
All shal be sayd I vndertake
Er of this boke an ende I make.

Now come I to my tale agayne
But alderfirst, I wol you sayne
The fasshyon and the countenaunces
Of all the folke that on the daunce is
The god of Loue iolyf and lyght
Ladde on his honde a lady bright
Of high prise, and of great degre
This lady called was Beaute
And an arowe, of which I tolde
Ful wel thewed was she holde
Ne she was derke ne browne, but bright
And clere as the moone lyghte
Ageyne whom al the sterres semen
But smale candels, as we demen
Her flesshe was tender as dowe of flour
Her chere was symple as bryde in bour
As whyte as lylye or rose in tyse
Her face gentyl and tretyse
Feyre she was, and smale to se
No wynnerd browes had she
Ne popped her, for it neded nought
To wyndie her, or to peynte her ought
Her tresses yelowe, a longe straughten
Vnto her heles downe they raughten
Her nose, her mouthe, her eye and cheke
Wel wrought, and al the remnaunt eke
A ful great sauour and a swote
Me thought in myne hert rote
As helpe me god, whan I remembre
Of the fasshon of euery membre
In world is none so fayre a wight
For yong she was, and hewed bright
Gent, and in her myddel small
Besyde Beaute yede Bytheselle
And bright lady of great nobleste
And great of price in euery place
But who so durste to her trespace
Or tyl her folke, in werke or dede
He were ful hardy out of drede
For bothe she helpe and hyndre may
And that is not of yesterday
That riche folke haue ful great myght

To

To helpe, and eke to greue a wight
The beſt and greateſt of valour
Dydden Richeſſe ful great honour
And beſy weren her to ſerue
For that they wolde her loue deſerue
They cleped her Lady great and ſmal
This wide world her dredeth al
This world is al in her daungere
Her court hath many a loſengere
And many a traytour enuyous
That ben ful beſy and curious
For to diſpreyſe, and to blame
That beſt deſerueu loue and name
To forne the folke hem to begylen
Theſe loſengeours hem preyſe a ſmylen
And thus the world vb word anoyuten
But afterwarde they pyll and poynten
The folke, right to the bare bone
Behynde her backe whan they ben gone
And foule abaten folkes pryſe
Full many a worthy man and wyſe
Han hyndred, and ydon to dye
Theſe loſengeours with her flatery
And maketh folke ful ſtraunge be
There as hem ought ben pryue
Wel yuel mote they thriue and thee
And yuel aryued mote they be
Theſe loſengeours ful of enuy
No good man loueth her company.

Richeſſe a robe of purple on had
Ne trowe not that I lye or mad
For in this worlde is none it lyche
Ne by a thouſande dele ſo ryche
Ne none ſo fayre, for it ful wele
With Orfreys leyde was euerydele
And puttrayde in the rybanynges
Of dukes ſtoryes, and of kynges
And with a bende of golde taſſyled
And knoppes fyne of gold amyled
Vbout her necke of gentyl entayle
Was ſhette the ryche Cheueſayle
In whiche there was ful great plente
Of ſtones clere, and fayre to ſe.
Richeſſe a gyrdle had vpon
The boket of it was of a ſton
Of bertue great, and mokell of myght
For who ſo bare the ſtone ſo bright
Of venym durſt him nothyng dout
While he the ſtone had him about
That ſtone was greatly for to loue
And tyl a riche mans behoue
Worthal the golde in Rome, and Fryſe
The Hourdant wrought in noble gyſe
Was as of a ſtone ful preyous
That was ſo fyne and vertuous
That whole a man it couth make
Of paſſye, and of torbe ake
And yet the ſtone had ſuche a grace
That he was ſther in euery place
Al thylke day not blynde to bene
That faſtyng might that ſtone ſene
The barres were of golde ful fyne
Vpon a tyſſue of Satyne
Ful heuy, great, and nothyng lyght
In euerych was a beſaunt wight
Vpon the treſſes of rychefſes
Was ſet a cercle of nobleſſe
Of bryndе golde, that ful light ſhone
So fayre trowe I was neuer none
But he were konnyng for the nones
That couldе deuyſe al the ſtones
That in that cercle ſhewen clere
It is a wonder thyng to here
For no man couldе preyſe or geſſe
Of hem the value or richeſſe
Rubyes there wer, Saphirs, Ragonnes
And Emeraudes, more than two ounces
But al before ful ſubtelly
A fyne Charbencle ſet ſaw I
The ſtone ſo clere was and ſo brighe
That al ſo ſone as it was nyght
Men myght ſene to go for nede
A myle or two, in length and brede
Suche lyght ſprange out of the ſtone
That richeſſe wonder bright ſhone
Vpon her heed, and all her face
And eke aboute her al the place
Dame richeſſe on her honde gan lede
A yonge man full of ſemelyhede
That the beſt loued of any thyng
His luſt was much in houſholdyng
In clothyng was he ful feruſt
And loued wel to haue horſe of pruſt
He wende to haue reproued be
Of thefte or murdre, if that he
Had in his ſtable an hackenay
And therfore he deſyred aye
To ben aqueynted with Richeſſe
For al his purpoſe, as I geſſe
Was for to make great diſpence
Without warnyng or defence
And Richeſſe might it wele ſuſtene
And her diſpenere wele maynteue
And hym alway ſuche plente ſende
Of golde and ſyluer for to ſpende

Without lacking or daungere
As it were pourde in a gaunere.

And after on the daunce went
Largesse, that set al her entent
For to ben honorable and free
Of Alexanders kynne was she
Her most ioye was ywis
Whan that she yaf,and sayd:haue this
Not Auarice the foule cayrfe
Was halfe to grype so entencyfe
As Largesse is,to yeue and spende
And god alway ynowe her sende
So that the more she yaue awaye
The more ywis she had alwaye
Great loos hath Largesse, a great pryse
For both wyse folke and dowyse
Were wholy to her bandon brought
So wel with vertes hath she wrought
And if she had an enemy
I trowe that she couth crafely
Make him ful sone her frende to be
So large of vertes,and wyse was she
Therfore she stode in loue and grace
Of riche and poore in euery place
A ful great foole is he ywis
That both riche and poore,and nigarde is
A lorde may haue no maner pryce
That greueth more than Auarice
For nygarde neuer with strength of hand
May wynne hym greate lordshyp or land
For frendes al to fewe hath he
To done his wyl performed be
And who so wol haue frendes here
He may not holde his treasour dere
For by ensample tel I thys
Right as an adamant ywis
Can drawen to him subtelly
The yron,that is layde therby
So draweth folkes hertes ywis
Syluer and golde that yeuen is
Largesse had on a robe freshe
Of ryche purpure Sarlynisshe
Wel fourmed was her face and clere
And opened had she her colere
For she right there had in present
Unto a lady made present
Of a gold broche ,ful wel wrought
And certes it misstate her nought
For through her smocke wrought vp sikke
The flesshe was sene as white as mylke
Largesse,that worthy was and wyse
Helde by the hond a knyght of pryse
Was sybbe to Arthour of Bretayne
And that was he that bare the enseigne
Of worshyp,and the Gouskaucoun
And yet he is of suche renoun
That men of him say fayre thynges
Before barons,erles,and kynges
This knyght was comen al newly
Fro tourneyeng fast by
There had be done great chyualrie
Through his vertue and his maistrie
And for the loue of his lemman
He cast downe many a doughty man
And next him daunced dame Fraunchise
Arayed in ful noble gyse
She nas not browne ne dunne of hewe
But whyte as snowe yfallen newe
Her nose was wrought at poynt deuyse
For it was gentyl and tretyse
With eyen glad,and browes bent
Her heere downe to her heles went
And she was symple as bouue on tree
Ful debonayre of hert was she
She durste neither say ne do
But that,that hir longeth to
And if a man were in distresse
And for her loue in heuynesse
Her hert wolde haue ful great pyte
She was so amyable and free
For were a man for her bestadde
She wold ben right sore a dradde
That she dyd ouer great outrage
But she hym helpe his harme taswage
Her thought it al a bylanye
And she had on a suckeny
That not of hempe herdes was
So fayre was none in al Fraas
Lorde it was ryddeled feryly
There nas not a poynt trewly
That it nas in his right assyse
Ful wel yclothed was Fraunchise
For there nys no clothe syteth bette
On damoisel,than doth rokette
A woman wel more fetyse is
In rokette,than in cote ywis
The white rokette ryddeled fayre
Betokeneth that ful debonayre
And swete was she that it bere
By her daunced a Bachelere
I can not tellen you what he hyght
But fayre he was and of good hyght
Al had he ben, I say no more
The lordes sonne of Lyndesore.
And next that daunced Curtesy

That

That preised was of lowe and hye
For nether proude ne fole was she
She for to daunce called me
I praye god gyue her good grace
For whan I come first into the place
She nas not nyce, ne outragrous
But wyse and ware, and vertuous
Of fayre speche, and fayre answere
As was neuer wight myssayde of here
She bare no rancour to no wyght
Clere browne she was, and therto bryght
Of face and body auenaunt
I wotte no lady so plesaunt
She were worthy for to bene
Inempriesse or crowned quene.
And by her went a knyght daunceryng
That worthy was and wel spekyng
And ful wel coude he don honour
The knyght was fayre and thyffe in flour
And in armure a semely man
And wel beloued of his lemman.
(Fayre I delyuerde than fauch I
That alway was me fast by
Of her haue I without fayle
Tolde you the shape and appareyle
For (as I said) Lo, that was she
That dyd to me so great bounte
She the gate of that gardyn
Vndyd, and let me passen in
And after daunced as I gesse
And she fulfylled of lustynesse
That nas not yet .xii. yere of age
With herte wylde, and thought volage
After she was, but she ne mente
None harme ne vleyght in her entente
But onely lust and iolyte
For yonge folke, wel weten ye
Haue lytel thought, but on her play
Her lemman was besyde alway
In suche a gyse that he her kyste
At al tymes that him lyste
That al the daunce myght it se
They make no force of preuyte
For who so spake of hem yuel or wele
They were ashamed neuer a dele
But men might seue hem softe there
As it two yonge doues were
For yonge was thilke bachelere
Of beaute wot I non his pere
And he was ryght of suche an age
As Youth his lefe, and suche corage
The lusty folke that daunced there
And also other that with hem were
That weren all of her meyne
Ful hende folke, wyse, and free
And folke of fayre porte truely
There were al comenly
When I had sene the countenaunces
Of hem that laddon thus these daunces
Than had I wyll to gon and se
The gardyn that so lyked me
And loken on these fayre Laurelles
On pyne trees, Cedres, and Olyueres
The daunces than ended were
For many of hem that daunced there
Were with her loues went away
Vnder the trees to haue her play.

A Lorde they lyued lustely
I great foole were he sykerly
That nolde his thankes suche lyfe lede
For this dare I sayne out of drede
That who so myght so well fare
For better lyfe durste him not care
For there nys so good paradyse
As to haue a loue at his deuyse
Out of that place went I tho
And in that gardyn gan I go
Playeng a longe ful merely
The god of Loue ful hastely
Vnto him Swete Lokyng clept
No lenger wolde he that she kept
His bowe of golde, that shone so bryght
He had him bent anon right
And he ful soone set an ende
And at a brayde he gan it bende
And toke him of his arowes fyue
Ful sharpe and redy for to dryue
Now god that syteth in maieste
Fro deedly woundes he kepe me
If so be that he had me there
For if I with his arowe mette
It had me greued sore yuis
But I that nothyng wyst of this
Went vp and downe, ful many a way
And he me folowed fast alway
But no where wolde I rest me
Tyll I had in al the gardyn be.

The gardyn was by mesurynge
Right euen a square in copassyng
It as longe was as it was large
Of fruite had euery tree his charge
But it were any hydous tree
Of whiche there were two or thre
There were, and that wote I full wele

Of pomgarnettes a full great dele
That is a fruite ful welle to lyke
Namely to folke whan they ben syke
And trees there were, great foyson
That baren nutes in her season
Suche as men nutemygges call
That swote of sauour ben withall
And Almandres great plente
Frygges, and many a date tre
There weren, if men had nede
Through the gardyn, in length and brede
There was eke wexyng many a spyce
As clowe gylofre, and lycorice
Gyngere, and grevnde Garis
Cancll, and setewale of pris
And many a spyce delytable
To eten whan men syse fro table
And many homely trees there were
That peches, coynes, and appics bere
Pedlers, plommes, peeres, chelleynis
Cherise, of whiche many one fayne is
Notes, alcys, and bolas
That for to sene it was solas
With many hygh lauter, and pyne
Was renged clene al that gardyne
With Cipres, and with Oliuerys
Of whiche that nygh no plenty here is
There were Elmes great and stronge
Maples, asshe, oke, aspe, planes longe
Fyne ewe, popler, and lyndes fayre
And other trees full many a payre
What should I tel you more of it
There were so many trees yet
That I shulde al encombred be
Er I had rekened euery tree
These trees were set that I deuyse
One from another in assyse
Fyue fadome or fire, I trowe so
But they were hie and great also
And for to kepe out wel the sonne
The croppes were so thicke pronne
And euery braunce in other knytte
And ful of grene leues sytte
That sonne myght there none discende
Lest the tender grasses shende
There myght men Does and Roes y se
And of squirels ful great plente
From bow to bow alwaye lepynge
Conys there were also playenge
That comen out of her clapers
Of sondry colours and maners
And maden many a tournevenng
Upon the freshe grasse springyng
In places sawe I welles there
In whiche there no frogges were
And fayre in shadowe was euery wel
But I ne can the nombre tel
Of stremys smal that by deuyse
Wyth the had done come throughe condyse
Of whiche the water in renuyng
Gan make a noyse ful lykyng
About the brinkes of these welles
And by the stremes ouer al elles
Sprange vp the grasse, as thicke yset
And soft as any velvet
On which men myght his lemman ley
As on a fetherbed to play
For the erthe was full softe and swete
Through moisture of the well wete
Spronge vp the sote grene gras
As fayre, as thicke, as myster was
But moche amended it the place
That therth was of suche a grace
That it of floures hath plente
That both in somer and wynter be
There sprange the violet al newe
And freshe perwynke riche of hewe
And floures yelowe, white, and rede
Suche plente grewe there neuer in mede
Full gaye was al the grounde a queynt
And poudred, as men had it peint
With many a freshe and sondry floure
That casten vp ful good sauour
I wol not longe holde you in fable
Of al this garden delectable
I mote my tonge stynten nede
For I ne may withouten drede
Naught tellen you the beaute all
Ne halfe the bounte there withall
I went on right honde and on lefte
About the place, it was not lefte
Till I had al the garden bene
In the eftres that men might sene
And thus while I went in my playe
The god of loue me folowed aye
Right as an hunter can abyde
The beest, tyl he seeth his tyde
To shoten at goodnesse to the dere
Whan that him nedeth go no nere
And so befyl, I rested me
Besydes a well vnder a tree
Which tree in Fraunce men cal a pyne
But sithe the tyme of kynge Appyne
Ne grewe there tree in mannes syght
So fayre, ne so wel wore in hight
In al that parde so high was none

And

And springyng in a marble stone
Had nature set, the sothe to tell
Under that pyne tree a well
And on the border al without
Was writen in the stone about
Letters smal, that sayden thus
Here starf the fayre Narcisus.
Narcisus was a bachelere
That loue had caught in his daungere
And in his nette gan him so straine
And dyd him so to wepe and playne
That nede him must his lyfe forgo
For a fayre lady that hight Echo
Him loued ouer any creature
And gan for him suche payne endure
That on a tyme she him tolde
That if he her louen nolde
That her behoued nedes dye
There lay none other remedye
But natheleſſe for his beaute
So feire and daungerous was he
That he nolde graunten her asking
For wepyng, ne for fayre prayeng
And whan she herde him werne her so
She had in hert so great wo
And toke it in so great dispyte
That she without more respyte
Was deed anon: but ere she deyde
Ful pitously to god she preyde
That proude herted Narcisus
That was in loue so daungerous
Might on a day ben hampered so
For loue, and ben so hote for wo
That neuer he might to love attayne
Thanshulde he fele in euery payne
What sorowe trewe louers maken
That ben so vilaynously forsaken.

This prayer was but resonable
Therfore god helde it ferme and stable
For Narcisus shortly to tell
By aventure came to that well
To rest him in the shadowyng
A day, whan he come from huntyng
This Narcisus had suffred paynes
For renning al day in the playnes
And was for thurst in great distreſſe
Of herte, and of his werynesſe
That had his breethe almost benomen
Whan he was to that wel yromen
That shadowed was with braunches grene
He thought of thilke water shene
To drinke, and freshe him wele withall
And downe on knees he gan to fall
And forth his necke and heed outstraught
To drinke of that well a draught
And in the water anon was sene
His nose, his mouthe, his eyen shene
And he therof was all abashed
His owne shadowe had him betrasshed
For wel wende he the forme se
Of a chylde of great beaute
Well couth loue him wreke tho
Of daunger and of pride also
That Narcisus somtyme him bere
He quite him wel his guerdon there
For he mused so in the well
That shortely the sothe to tell
He loued his owne shadowe so
That at laste he starf for wo
For whan he sawe that he his wyll
Might in no maner way fulfyll
And that he was so faste caught
That he him couthe comforte naught
He lost his wytte, right in that place
And deyde within a lytel space
And thus his warysom he toke
For the lady that he forsoke
Ladyes I pray ensample taketh
Ye that avenst your loue mistaketh
For if her dethe be you to wyte
God can full wel your wille quite.

Whan that this letter of whiche I tell
Had taught me that it was the welle
Of Narcisus in his beaute
I gan anon withdrawe me
Whan it fel in my remembraunce
That him betyde such mischaunce
But at the laste than thought I
That scathleſſe, ful sykerly
I myght unto the welle go
Wher of shul I abasshen so
Unto the welle than went I me
And downe I loured for to se
The clere water in the stone
And eke the gravel, whiche that shone
Downe in the botome, as sylver fyne
For of the welle, this is the fyne
In world is none so clere of hewe
The water is euer freshe and newe
That welneth up, with wawes bright
The mountenaunce of two fyngers hight
About it is grasse springyng
For moyste for dyche and wel lykyng
That it ne may in wynter dye

No more than may the see the dyze.
DOwn at the bottome set sawe I
Two cristall stones craftely
In thilke fresshe and fayre well
But o thynge sothly dare I tell
That ye woll holde a great mernayle
Whan it is tolde, withouten fayle
For whan the sonne clere in syght
Cast in that welle his bemes bright
And that the heete discended is
Than taketh the cristall stone ywis
Ageyne the sonne an hundred hewes
Blewe, yelowe, & reed that fresh & newe is
Yet hath the meruaylous cristall
Suche strength, that the place ouer all
Both foule and tree, and leues grene
And all the verde in it is sene
And for to don you to understande
To make ensample wol I fonde
Right as a myrrour openly
Sheweth all thing that stondeth thereby
As well the colour, as the fygure
Withouten any couerture
Right so the cristall stone shynyng
Withouten any discouryng
The entrees of the verde accuseth
To him that in the water museth
For euer in whiche halfe that ye be
Ye may wel halfe the gardyne se
And if he turne, he may right wele
Sene the remenaunt euery dele
For there is none so lytel thyng
So hydde me closed with shyttyng
That it ne is sene, as though it were
Paynted in the cristall there
This is the myrrour perilling
In whiche the proude Narcisus
Sey al his fayre face bright
That made him sith to lye vpright
For who so loke in that myrrour
There may nothyng ben his socour
That he ne shall there se somthyng
That shal him lede into laughyng
Ful many a worthy man hath it
Yblent, for folke of greatest wyt
Ben soone caught here and wasted
Withouten respyte ben they basted
Here cometh to folke of newe rage
Here chaungeth many wight corage
Here lythe no rede ne wytte therto
For Venus sonne, dan Cupido
Hath sowen there of loue the sede
That helpe ne lythe there none, ne rede
So cercleth it the welle aboute
His gynnes hath he set withoute
Right for to catche in his panters
These damosels and bachelers
Loue wyl none other byde catche
Though he set eyther nette or latche
And for the sede that here was sowen
This welle is cleped, as wel is knowen
The welle of Loue, of very right
Of which there hath ful many wight
Spoken in bokes diuersely
But they shul neuer so verily
Discripcion of the welle here
Ne eke the sothe of this matere
As ye shul, whan I haue vndo
The craft that her belongeth to.

ALl way me lyked for to dwell
To sene the cristall in the well
That shewed me ful openly
A thousande thinges fast by
But I may say in sory houre
Stode I to loken or to powre
For sythen I sore syghed
That Myrrour hath me now entriked
But had I first knowen in my wyt
The vertue and strengthes of it
I nolde not haue mused there
Me had bette ben els where
For in the mare I fell anone
That had bytrasshed many one
In thilke Myrrour sawe I tho
Amonge a thousande thynges mo
A roser charged ful of rosis
That with an hedge aboute enclosis
Tho had I suche luste and enuye
That for Daryn ne for Dauye
Nolde I haue left to gone and se
There greatest heape of roses be
Whan I was with this rage hente
That caught hath many a man & shente
Towarde the Roser gan I go
And whan I was not ferre therfro
The sauour of the roses swote
Me smote right to the herte rote
As I had all enbaumed me
And if I ne had endouted me
To haue ben hated or assayled
Wy thankes wol I not haue fayled
To pull a rose of al that route
To bere in myn honde aboute
And smellen to it where I went
But euer I dredde me to repent

And

And leste it greued or forthought
The lorde that thilke gardyn wrought
Of roses there were great wone
So fayre ware neuer in Rome
Of knoppes closed some sawe I there
And some wel better wexen were
And some there ben of other moyson
That drowe nygh to her season
And spedde hem faste for to spede
I loue wel suche roses redde
For drede roses, and open also
Ben passed in a daye or two
But knoppes wyll freshe be
Two dayes at leest, or els thre
The knoppes greatly lyked me
For fayrer maye there no man se
Who so myght haue one of all
I roughte hym ben ful lefe withall
Wyght I garlonde of hem geten
For no recheste I wolde it letten
Amonges the knoppes I chese one
So fayre, that of the remenaunt none
Me preyse I halfe so wel as it
Whan I auyse in my wit
For it so wel was enlumyned
With colour reed, as wel fyned
As nature couthe it make fayre
And it hath leaues well foure payre
That kind hath set through his knowing
Aboute the redde roses springing
The stalke was as ryghe ryght
And theron stode the knoppe vpryght
That it ne bowed vpon no syde
The swote smell sprange so wyde
That it dyed al the place aboute
Whan I had smelled the sauour swote
No wyll had I fro thence yet go
But somdele nere it went I tho
To take it, but myn honde for drede
Me durste I to the Rose bede
For thilkeles sharpe of many maners
Nettles, thornes, and hoked briers
For muche they dismayed me
For sore I dradde to harmed be.

The god of Loue, with bowe bent
That al day set had hys talent
To pursue and to spyen me
Was wondyng by a fygge tree
And whan he sawe howe that I
Had chosen so ententyfely
The bothum more vnto my pay
Than any other that I say
He toke an arowe, ful sharpely whette
And in hys bowe when it was sette
He streyght vp to his ere drough
The stronge bowe, that was so tough
And shotte at me so wonder smerte
That through myn eye vnto myn herte
The takel smote, and depe it wente
And therwith al suche colde me hente
That vnder clothes warme and softe
Sythen that day I haue chyuered ofte
Whan I was hurte thus in stounde
I fell downe platte vnto the grounde
Myn herte fayled, and faynted are
And longe tyme in swoune I laye
But whan I came out of swounyng
And had wytte, and my felyng
I was al mate, and wende ful wele
Of blode haue lorne a full great dele
But certes the arowe that in me stoode
Of me ne drewe no droppe of bloode
For why, I founde my woundes al dry
Than toke I with myn hondes twey
The arowe, and ful fast it out plight
And in the pulling sore I syght
So at the last the shafte of tree
I drough out, with the fethers thre
But yet the hoked heed ywis
The whiche Beaute called is
Ran so depe in myn herte pace
That I it might not arace
But in myne herte stylle stoode
Al bledde I not a droppe of bloode
I was bothe anguyshous and trouble
For the peryll that I sawe double
I wyst what to saye or do
Me get a lethe my woundes to
For neyther through graille ne rote
Me had I helpe of hope ne bote
But to the bothum euer mo
Myn herte drewe, for all my wo
My thought was in none other thyng
For had it ben in my kepyng
It wolde haue brought my lefe agayne
For certes euenly, I dare well sayne
The sight onely, and the sauoure
Alegged muche of my langoure
Than gan I for to drawe me
Towarde the Bothum fayre to se
And Loue had gette hym in his throwe
Another arowe in to his bowe
And for to shote gan hym dresse
The arowes name was Symplesse
And whan that Loue gan nygh me nere

He drowe it vp withouten were
And shote at me with all hys myght
So that this arowe anone ryght
Throughout eygh as it was founde
In to myn herte hath made a wounde
Than I anone dyd all my crafte
For to drawen out the shafte
And therwithall I syghed efte
But in myn herte the heed was lefte
Whiche aye encreced my desyre
Unto the bothum drowe I nere
And euermo that me was wo
The more desyre had I to go
Unto the Roser, where that grewe
The fresche bothum, so bright of hewe
Better me were to haue letten be
But it behoued nede me
To don right as myn herte badde
For euer the body muste be ladde
After the herte, in wele and wo
Of force togyther they must go
But neuer this archer wolde fyne
To shote at me with al hys pyne
And for to make me to hym mete
The thirde arowe he gan to shete
Whan best hys tyme he might espye
The whiche was named Curtesye
In to myn herte he dyd auale
I swoune I fell, bothe deed and pale
Longe tyme I lay, and styred nought
Tyl I abrayed out of my thought
And faste than I auysed me
To drawe out the shafte of tree
But euer the heed was lefte behynde
For ought I couthe pull or wynde
So sore it styced whan I was hytte
That by no crafte I myght it flytte
But anguyshous and ful of thought
I felte such wo, my wound aye wrought
That somoned me alway to go
Towarde the Rose, that pleced me so
But I ne durst in no manere
Because the archer was so nere
For euermore gladly as I rede
Brent chylde of fyre hath muche drede
And certes yet for all my peyne
Though that I syghe, yet arowes reyne
And grounde quarels, sharpe of steele
Ne for no payne that I myght feele
Yet myght I not my selfe withholde
The fayre Roser to beholde
For Loue me gaue suche hardyment
For to fulfyll his commaundement
Upon my feete I rose vp than
Feble, as a forwounded man
And forthe to gon myght I sette
And for the archer nolde I lette
Towarde the Roser faste I drowe
But thornes sharpe, mo than ynowe
There were, and also thystels thycke
And brieres brimme for to pricke
That I ne myght gette grace
The rough thornes for to pace
To sene the Roses freshe of hewe
I must abyde, though it me rewe
The hedge aboute so thycke was
That closed the Roses in compas
But o thyng lyked me right wele
I was so nygh, I myght fele
Of the bothum the swote odoure
And also se the freshe coloure
And that right greatly lyked me
That I so nere myght it se
Suche ioye anon therof had I
That I forgate my malady
To sene I had suche delyte
Of sorowe and angre I was al quite
And of my woundes that I had thore
For nothyng lyken me might more
Than dwellen by the Roser aye
And thence neuer to passe awaye
But whan a whyle I had be there
The god of Loue, whiche al to share
Myn herte with his arowes kene
Casteth hym to yeue me woundes grene
He shote at me full hastely
An arowe named Company
The whiche takell is full able
To make these ladyes mercyable
Than I anone gan chaungen hewe
For greuaunce of my wounde newe
That I agayne fell in swouning
And syghed sore in complayning
Sore I complayned that my sore
On me gan greuen more and more
I had none hope of allegraunce
So nigh I drowe to disperaunce
I rought of dethe, ne of life
Whether that loue wolde me drife
Yf me a martir wolde he make
I might his power not forsake
And whyle for anger thus I woke
The god of Loue an arowe toke
Ful sharpe it was and pugnaunt
And it was called Fayre semblaunt
The whiche in wyse wolde consent

That

That any louer hym repent
To serue hys loue, with hert and all
For any peryll that may befall
But though this arow was kene groũde
As any rasour that is founde
To cutte and kerue at the poynte
The god of Loue it had anoynt
With a precious oyntment
Some dele to yeue alegrement
Upon the woundes that he hade
Throughe the body in my herte made
To helpe her sores, and to cure
And that they may the better indure
But yet this arowe, without more
Made in myn hert a large sore
That in ful great payne I abode
But aye the oyntment wente abrode
Throughout my woundes large & wyde
It spredde aboute in euery syde
Through whose vertue, and whose might
Myn hert ioyfull was and lyght
I had ben deed and all to shente
But for the precious oyntmente
The shafte I drowe out of the arowe
Nothyng for wo tyght wonder narowe
But the herd, whiche made me smerte
Lefte behynde in myn herte
With other foure, I dare well say
That neuer woll be take away
But the oyntment halpe me wele
And yet suche sorowe dyd I fele
That all day I chaunged hewe
Of my woundes freshe and newe
As men might se in my vysage
The arowes were so full of rage
So vatyaunt of dyuersyte
That men in euerych myght se
Bothe great anoye, and eke swetnesse
And ioye meynt with bytternesse (wood
Nowe were they easy, nowe were they
In hem I felt bothe harme and good
Nowe sore without alegrement
Nowe softyng with oyntment
It softened here, and pricked there
Thus ease and anger togyther were.

The god of Loue delyuerly
Come lepande to me hastely
And sayde to me in great iape
Yelde the, for thou may not escape
Way no defence auayle the here
Therefore I rede make no daungere
Yf thou wolte yelde the hastely
Thou shalte rather haue mercy
He is a foole in ydelnesse
That with daunger or stoutnesse
Rebelleth, there that he shoulde plese
In suche folye is lytell ese
Be meke, where thou must nedes bowe
To stryue ayen is nought thy prowe
Come atones, and haue ydo
For I wol that it be so
Than yelde the here debonairly
And I answered ful humbly
Gladly syr, at your byddyng
I wol me yelde in all thyng
To your seruyce I woll me take
For god defende that I shulde make
Ayen your byddyng resistence
I wol not don so great offence
For if I dyd, it were no skyll
Ye may do with me what ye wyll
Saue or spyll, and also so
For you in no wyse may I go
My lyfe, my deth, is in your honde
I may not lasse out of your bonde
Playne at your lyste I yelde me
Hopyng in hert, that sometyme ye
Comforte and ese shul me sende
Or els shortly, this is the ende
Withouten helthe, I mote aye dure
But if ye take me to your cure
Comforte or helth, howe shulde I haue
Sythe ye me hurte, but ye me saue
The helthe of Loue more be founde
Where as they token first her wounde
And yf ye lyste of me to make
Your prisoner, I woll it take
Of hert and wyll fully at gre
Holy and playne I yelde me
Without feynyng or feyntyse
To be gouerned by your empryse
Of you I here so muche prise
I wol ben bolde at your deuyse
For to fulfyll your lysyng
And repent for nothyng
Hopyng to haue yet in some tyde
Mercy, of that I abyde
And with that couenaunt yelde I me
Anon downe knelyng vpon my kne
Proferyng for to kysse his fete
But for nothyng he wolde me lete.

And sayd, I loue the bothe and preise
Sens that thyn answere doth me ese
For thou answered so curtesly

For

For nowe I wote wel veterly
That thou art gentle by thy speche
For though a man ferre wolde seche
He shulde not fynden in certayne
No suche answere of no vylayne
For suche a wordene myght nought
Issue out of a vilaynes thought
Thou shalt not lesen of thy speche
For thy helpynge woll I eche
And eke encresen that I maye
But first I wol that thou obaye
Fully for thyn anauntage
Anone to do me here homage
And sythe kysse thou shalte my mouthe
Whiche to no vilayne was neuer couthe
For to aproche it, ne for to touche
For saufe of cherles I ne vouche
That they shal neuer neigh it nere
For curtesye, and of fayre manere
Ouertraught, and ful of gentelnesse
He must ben, that shall me kysse
And also of ful highe fraunchyse
That shal attreyne to that empryse
And first of o thyng warne I the
That payne and great aduersyte
Be more endure, and ehe trauayle
That shal me serue, without fayle
But there agayns the to comforte
And with thy seruyce to disporte
Thou maist ful glade and ioyfull be
So good a mayster to haue as me
And lorde of so high renoun
I beare of loue the Gonfenoun
Of Curtesye the banere
For I am of fryle the manere
Gentyll, curteys, meke, and fre
That who euer entendife be
Me to honour, doute, and serue
And also that he hym obserue
Fro trespace and fro vylanye
And hym gouerne in curtesye
With wyl and with entencyon
For when he first in my prison
Is caught, than must he vtterly
Frothence forthe ful besyly
Caste hym genyl for to be
Yf he desire helpe of me
Anone without more delaye
Withouten daunger or affraye
I become his man anone
And gaue hym thankes many a one
And kneled downe with hondes ioynt
And made it in my poyte full queynt
The ioye went to my herte rote
Whan I had kyssed hys mouth so swote
I had suche myrthe and suche lykyng
It cured me of langurshyng
He asked of me than hostages
I haue he sayde taken frie homages
Of one and other, where I haue bene
Disseyned ofte, withouten wene
These felons ful of falsyte
Haue many sythes begyled me
And through her falsched her lust achyued
Wherof I repent, and am agreued
And I them gette in my daungere
Her falsched shul they bye ful dere
But for I loue the, I say the playne
I woll of the be more certayne
For the soye I woll nowe bynde
That thou away ne shalt not wynde
For to denyen thy conenaunt
Or done that is not auenaunt
That thou were false, it were great nede
Sythe thou semest so ful of trueth
Sir, il the lyste to vnderstande
I mercyle the askyng this demande
For why or wherfore shulde ye
Hostages or borowes aske of me
Or any other sykernesse
Sythe ye wote in sothfastnesse
That ye me haue suspryled so
And hole myn herte taken me fro
That it wol do for me nothyng
But if it be at your byddyng
Myn hert is yours, a myn right nought
As it bethought, in dede and thought
Redy in all to worche your wyll
Whether so turne to good or yll
So sore it lusteth you to plese
No man therof may you displese
Ye haue theron sette suche lustyre
That it is wortheyed in many wyse
And yf ye doute it nolde obey
Ye maye therof do make a key
And holde it with you for hostage
Sithe certes this none outrage
Good Loue and fully I accorde
For of the body he is ful lorde
That hath the herte in his tresore
Outrage it were to aske more.

Than of hys auement he drough
A lytel key fetyse ynough
Whiche was of golde polysshed clere
And sayde to me, with this key here

Thyne

Thyne hert to me nowe wol I hette
For al my ioyful loke and knette
I bynde vnder this lyttel key
That no wight may cary awey
This key is full of great poste
With whiche anone he touched me
Under the syde ful softely
That be myn hert sodaynly
Without any hadde speered
That yet ryght nought it hath me deered
When he had done hys wyl al out
And I had put hym out of dout
Sir I sayde: I haue ryght great wyl
Your lustes and pleasure to fulfyl
Loke ye my seruyce take at gree
By thilke fayth ye owe to me
I aske nought for recreaundyse
For I nought dout of your seruyce
But the seruaunt trauayleth in payne
That for to serven dothe hys payne
Vnto that lorde, whiche in no wyse
Conne hym no thanke for his seruyce.

Our sayde, dismay the nought
Saith he for socour hast me sought
In thy seruice wol I take
And highe of degree I wol the make
Ywis dreade ne hynder the
But as I hope it shal nought be
To worthyp no wight by auenture
Yet come, but be payne endure
Abyde and suffer thy disese
That hurteth nowe, it shal be lese
I wote my selfe what may the saue
What medicine thou wouldest haue
And if thy trouth to me thou kepe
I shal vnto thyne helpyng crepe
To cure thy woundes & make hem clene
Were so they olde or grene
Thou shalt be holpen at wordes fewe
For certaynly thou shalt wel thewe
Where that thou seruest with good wyll
For to accomplyshen and fulfyll
My comaundementes day and nyght
Which I to louers yeue of right.

Sir, for goddes loue sayde I
Er ye passe hens entirely
Your comaundements to me ye sai
And I shal kepe hem if I may
For hem to kepen is al my thought
And if so be I wote hem nought
Than may I vnwityngly
Wherfore I pray you entierly
With al myne hert, me to lere
That I trespace in no manere
The god of loue than charged me
Anon, as ye shal here and se
Worde by worde, by right empryse
So as the Romaunt shall deuyse
The maister leseth his tyme to lere
When the disciple wol not here
It is but payne on hym to swynke
That on hys lernyng wol not thynke
Who so lust loue, lerne hym entende
For now the Romance begynneth to amende
Nowe is good to here in fay
Yf any be that canne it say
And poynt it as the reson is
Sette for other gate vnwys
It shal nat wel in al thyng
Be brought to good understondyng
For a reder that poynteth yl
A good sentence may ofte spyl
The boke is good at the endyng
Rede of nowe and lerne thyng
For who so wol the endyng here
The crafte of loue he shall nowe lere
Yf that he wol so longe abyde
Tyl I this Romance may endyte
And vnto the signifiaunce
Of this dreme in to Romaunce
The forthfarnesse that nowe is hydde
Without couerture shal be kydde
When I vndone haue this dreming
Wherin no worde is of leasing.

Villany at the begynnyng
I wol say loue ouer al thyng
Thou leane, if thou wolt be
False, and trespace ayenst me
I curse and blame generally
Al men that louen villany
For villany maketh villayne
And by hys dedes a cherle is seyne
These villayns arne without eyre
Frendshyp, loue, and al honure
And receyue vnto my seruyce
Men that ben villayns of empryse
But vnderstonde in thyn entent
That this is not myn entendement
To clepe no wight in no ages
Purely gentel for hys lynages
But who so is vertuous
And in his porte not outrageous
When suche one thou seest the before

Though

Though he be not gentyll borne
Thou mayst wel seyne this is in sothe
That he is gentyll, bycause he dothe
As longeth to a gentyll man
Of hem none other deme I can
For certaynly withouten drede
A chorle is demed by his dede
Of bye or lowe, as ye may se
Or of what kynred that he be
Ne lay nought for none yuel wyll
Thyng that is to holden styll
It is no worthyp to missey
Thou maist ensample take of key
That was someyme for missayeng
Hated bothe of olde and yonge
As ferre as Gaweyn the worthye
Was praysed for hys curtesye
Kay was hated, for he was fell
Of worde dispitous and cruell
Wherfore be wyse and aqueyntable
Goodly of worde, and resonable
Bothe to lesse and eke to mare
And whan thou comest there men are
Loke that thou haue in custome aye
First to salue hem if thou maye
And if it fal that of hem somme
Salue the first, be not domme
But quite hym curtesly anon
Without abydyng, er they gon
For nothyng eke thy tonge applye
To speke wordes of rybaudye
To bllarne speche, in no degre
Late neuer thy lyppe vnbounden be
For I nought holde him in good fayth
Curteys that foule wordes sayth
And al women serue and preyse
And to thy power her honour reyse
And if that any missayere
Dispyse women, that thou mayst here
Blame him, and bidde him holde him styl
And serue thy might, and all thy wyll
Women and ladyes for to plese
And to do thyng that may hem ese
That they euer speke good of the
For so thou maist best prayse be
Loke fro pryde thou kepe the wele
For thou maiste bothe perceyue and fele
That pride is bothe foly and sinne
And he that pride hath hym within
Ne may his hert in no wyse
Weken ne souplen to seruyce
For pride is founde in euery parte
Contrarye vnto Loues arte
And he that loueth trewely
Shulde hym conteyne iolyly
Without pride in sondrye wise
And him disguysen in queyntice
For queynte aray, without drede
Is nothyng proude, who taketh hede
For freshe aray, as men may se
Without pride may ofte be
Mayntayne thy selfe after thy rent
Of robe and eke of garment
For many sythe fayre clothyng
A man amendeth in muche thyng
And loke alway that they be shape
What garment that thou shalt make
Of hym that can best do
With al that parteyneth therto
Poynes and sleues be wel sittande
Right and streyght on the hande
Of shone and bootes, newe and fayre
Loke at the lest thou haue a payre
And that they sytte so fetously
That these rude may vtterly
Merueyle, syth that they sytte so playne
Howe they come an or of agayne
Weare streyght gloues with aumere
Of sylke, and alway with good chere
Thou yeue, if thou haue ryches
And if thou haue nought spende the lesse
Alway be mery, if thou may
But waste not thy good alway
Haue harte of floures freshe as May
Chapelet of Roses of whitsonday
For suche aray ne costneth but lyte
Thyn hodes washe, thy tethe make white
And lette no fylthe vpon the be
Thy nayles blacke, if thou mayst se
Voyde it away delyuerly
And kembe thyne heed right iolyly
Farce not thy visage in no wise
For that of loue is nat thempryse
For loue dothe haten, as I fynde
A beaute that cometh nat of kynde
Alway in hert I rede the
Gladde and mery for to be
And be as ioyfull as thou canne
Loue hath no ioye of sorowful manne
That yuel is ful of curtesye
That knoweth in his maladye
For euer of loue the sickenesse
Is meynt with swete and bitternesse
The sore of loue is meruaylous
For nowe the louer is ioyous
Nowe can he playne, nowe can he grone

Nowe

Now can he syngen, now maken mone
To day he playneth for heuynesse
To morow he playneth for iolynesse
The lyfe of loue is ful contrarye
Which stoundemeale can ofte barye
But if thou canst myrthes make
That men in gre wol gladly take
To it goodly, I commaunde the
For men shulde where so euer they be
Nothing that hem lyttyng is
For therof cometh good loos and prys
Wherof that thou be vertuous
Ne be not straunge ne daungerous
For if that thou good ryder be
Ma[illegible]ably that men may se
In armes also if thou conne
Pursue tyl thou a name hast wonne
And if thy voyce be fayre and clere
Thou shalt maken no great daungere
Whan to synge they goodly prey
It is thy worshyp for to obey
Also to you it longeth aye
To harpe and gyterne, daunce and playe
For if he can wel lote and daunce
It may him greatly do auaunce
Among eke for thy lady sake
Songes and cõplayntes that thou make
For that wol meuen in her herte
When they reden of thy smarte
Loke that no man for scarce the holde
For that may greue the manyfolde
Reson wol that a louer be
In his yeftes more large and fre
Than chorles that ben not of louyng
For who therof can any thyng
He shal be lefe aye for to yeue
In londes lore who so wolde leue
For he that through a sodayne syght
Or for a kyssyng anon ryght
Yaue hole his hert, in wyl and thought
And to hym selfe kepeth right nought
After this swyfte, it is good reson
He yeue his good in abandon.

NOw wol I shortly here reherce
Of that I haue sayd in verce
All the sentence by and by
In wordes fewe compendously
That thou the better mayst on hem thinke
Whether so it be thou wake or wynke
For the wordes lytel greue
Iman to kepe, whan it is breue
Who so with Loue wol gon or ryde
He mote be curteys, and boyde of pryde
Hery, and ful of iolyte
And of Largesse a loued be.

First I ioyne the here in penaunce
That euer without repentaunce
Thou set thy thought in thy louyng
To last without repentyng
And thinke vpon thy myrthes swete
That shal folow after whan ye mete.

And for thou trewe to Loue shalt be
I wyl, and commaunde the
That in one place thou set al hole
Thyne hert, without halfen dole
For trechery and slerneſſe
For I loued neuer doubleneſſe
To many his herte that wol departe
Euerych shal haue but lytel parte
But of him drede I me right nought
That in one place setteth his thought
Therfore in o place it sette
And let it neuer thens flette
For if thou yeuest it in lemyng
I holde it but wrecched thyng
Therfore yeue it whole and quite
And thou shalt haue the more merytte
If it be lent, than after seone
The bounte and the thanke is done
But to Loue, free yeuen thyng
Requireth a great guerdonyng
Yeue it in yefte all quite fully
And make thy gyfte debonairly
For men that yefte holde more dere
That yeuen is with gladsome chere
That gifte nought to prayse is
That man yeueth maugre his
Whan thou hast yeuen thyne hert as I
Haue said the here openly
Than auentures shul the fall
Whiche harde and heuy ben with all
For ofte whan thou bethynkest the
Of thy louyng, where so thou be
Fro folke thou must depart in hye
That none perceyue thy maladye
But hyde thyne harme thou must alone
And go forth sole, & make thy mone
Thou shalt no while be in o state
But whylom colde and whylom hete
Now reed as Rose, nowe yelowe & pale
Such sorow I trow thou neuer hale
Cotidien, ne quartayne
It is not so full of peyne

For often tymes it hal fal
In loue, among thy paynes al
That thou thy selfe al holly
Foryeten shalt so vtterly
That many tymes thou shalt be
Styl as an ymage of tree
Domme as a stone, without stervng
Of fote or honde, without spekyng
Than sone after al thy payne
To memorye shalt thou come agayne
A man abasshed wonder sore
And aftet syghen more and more
For wyt thou wele withouten wene
In suche assate ful ofte haue bene
That haue the yuel of loue assayde
Wherthrough thou art so dismayde.

After a thought shal take the so
That thy loue is to ferre the fro
Thou shalt say, god what may this be
That I ne may my lady se
Myne hert alone is to her go
And I abyde al sole in wo
Departed fro myne owne thought
And with myne eyen se ryght nought
Alas myne eyen sene I ne may
My careful herte to conuay
Myne hertes guyde, but they be
I prayse nothyng what euer they se
Shul they abyde than, nay
But gone and vysiten without delay
That myne hert desyreth so
For certainly, but if they go
A foole my selfe I may well holde
When I ne se what myne hert wolde
Wherfore I wol gone her to sene
Or eased shal I neuer bene
But I haue some tokenyng
Than gost thou forth without dwelling
But ofte thou fayllest of thy desyre
Er thou mayst come her any nere
And wastest in vayne thy passage
Than faylest thou in a newe rage
For want of syght, thou gynnest mourne
And homwarde pensife thou dost returne
In great mischefe than shalt thou be
For tha.. agayne shal come to the
Sighes and playntes with newe wo
That no tryvyng pricketh so
Who wote it nought, he may go lere
Of hem that byen loue so dere
Nothyng thyne hert appesen maye
That ofte thou wolt gone and assaye
If thou mayst sene by auenture
Thy lyues loye, thyne hertes cure
So that by grace, if thou myght
Attayne of her to haue a syght
Than shalt thou done none other dede
But with that syght thyne eyen fede
That fayre freshe whan thou mayst se
Thyne hert shal so rauysshed be
That neuer thou woldest thy thankes lete
Ne remoue, for to se that swete
The more thou seest in sothfastnesse
The more thou coueytest of that swetenesse
The more thyne herte bremneth in fire
The more thyne hert is in desyre
For who considreth euery dele
It may be lykened wonder wele
The payne of loue vnto a fere
For euermore thou neyghest nere
Thought, or who so that it be
For very sothe I tel it the
The hotter euer shal thou brenne
As experience shall the kenne
Where so comest in any coste
Who is nert fyre he bremneth moste
And yet forsothe for al thyne here
Though thou for loue swelte and swete
Ne for no thyng thou frien may
Thou shalt not wyllen to passe away
And though thou go, yet must the nede
Thinke al day on her fayre hede
Whom thou beheldest with so good wyll
And holde thy selfe begyled yll
That thou ne haddest none hardyment
To shewe her aught of thyne entent
Thyn hert ful sore thou wolt dispise
And eke repreue of cowardyse
That thou so dull in euery thyng
Were dõme for drede, without spekyng
Thou shalte eke thynke ꝑ dyddest foly
That thou were her so fast by
And durste not auenture the to say
Some thyng, er thou came away
For thou haddest no more wonne
To speke of her whan thou begonne
But yet she wolde for thy sake
In armes goodly the haue take
It shulde haue be more worthe to the
Than of tresour great plente
Thus shalt ꝑ morne and eke cõplayne
And get encheson to gon agayne
Vnto thy walke, or to thy place
Where thou beheldest her fleshly face
And neuer for false suspection

Thou

Thou woldest fynde occasyon
For to gone vnto her house
So art thou than desyrous
A syght of her for to haue
If thou thyn honour myghtest saue
Or any erande mightest make
Thyder, for thy loues sake
Ful fayne thou woldest, but for drede
Thou goest not, leest that men take hede
Wherfore I rede in thy goynge
And also in thyne agayne comynge
Thou be wel ware that menne wyt
Feyne the other cause than it
To go that waye, or faste bye
Cobeale wel is no folye
And if so be it happe the
That thou thy loue there mayste se
In syker wyse thou her salewe
Wherwith thy colour wol transmewe
And eke thy blod shal al to quake
Thy hewe eke chaungen for her sake
But worde and wyt, with chere ful pale
Shul want for to tell thy tale
And if thou mayst so ferforth wynne
That thou Reason durst begynne
And woldest fayne thre thynges or mo
Thou shalt ful scarsly fayne the two
Though thou bethynke the neuer so wele
Thou shalt forgete yet some dele.

But yf thou deale with trecherye
For false louers mowe all foly
Fayn what he lust vnkouthe dred
They be so double wher falshed
For they in hert can thynke o thynge
And fayne another in her spekyng
And whan thy speche is ended all
Right thus to the it shal befall
If any worde than come to mynde
That thou to say hast left behynde
Than thou shalt brenne in great maregre
For thou shalt brenne as any fyre
This is the stryfe and eke the affraye
And the batell that lasteth aye
This bargayne ende may neuer take
But if that she thy peace wyl make
And whan the nyght is comen anon
A thousande angres shal come vpon
To bed as fast thou wolte the dyght
Where thou shalt haue but smal delyght
For whan thou wenest for to slepe
So ful of payne shalt thou crepe
Stert in thy bed about ful wyde
And turne ful ofte on euery syde
Now downward grofle, now vpright
And walow in wo the longe nyght
Thyne armes shalt ꝑ sprede a brede
As man in werre were forwerede
Than shal the come a remembraunce
Of her shape and her semblaunce
Wherto none other may be pere
And were thou wel without were
That the shal se somtyme that nyght
That thou hast her, that is so bryght
Naked betwene thyne armes there
Al forthfastnesse as though it were
Thou shalt make castels thā in Spayne
And dreme of toy, al but in vayne
And the delyten of ryght nought
Whyle thou so stombrest in that thought
That is so swete and delytable
The which in sothe nys but a fable
For it ne shal no whyle last
Than shalt thou syghe and wepe fast
And say dere god, what thing is this
My dreme is turned al amys
Which was ful swete and apparent
But nowe I wake it is al shent
Nowe rede this mery thought away
Twenty tymes vpon a day
I wolde this thought wold come agayne
For it alegeth wel my payne
It maketh me ful of ioyful thought
It sleeth me that it lasteth nought
Ah lorde, why nyl ye me socoure
The ioye I trowe that I langoure
The deth I wold me shuld do
Whyle I lye in her armes two
Myn harme is harde withouten drede
My great vnease ful ofte I mene.

I Wit wold I loue do so I myght
Haue fully ioye of her so bryght
My payne were quytte me rycht wele
Alas to great a thyng aske I
It is but foly, and wrong wenyng
To aske so outragious a thyng
And who so asketh folyly
He mote be warned hastely
And I ne wote what I may say
I am so fette out of the way
For I wold haue ful great lykyng
And ful great ioy of lasse thyng
For wold she of her gentylnesse
Withouten more, me ones kesse
It were to me a great guerdon
Relese of all my passyon
But it is harde to come therto
Al is but foly that I do
So hyghe I haue myne herte sette

Where I may no comforte gette
I wote not where I lay wel or nought
But this I wote wel in my thought
That it were bette of her alone
For to flynte my wo and mone
I loke on her I call goodly
That for to haue al utterly
Of an other al hole the play
Ib lorde where I shal byde the day
That euer she shall my lady be
Ye is ful cured, that may her se
A god, whan shal the dawnyng spryng-
To leggen thus is an angry thyng
I haue no toy thus here to lye
Whan that my loue is not me bye
A man to lyen hath great disese
Which may not slepe, ne rest in ese
I wolde it dawed, and were now day
And that the nyght were went away
For were it day, I wolde up ryse
Ib slowe sonne, shewe thyne empryse
Spede the to spriede thy beames bright
And chace the derkenesse of the nyght
To put away the stoundes stronge
Which in me lasten al to longe
The nyght shalt thou continue so
Without rest, in payne and wo
If euer thou knewe of loue distresse
Thou shall mowe lerne in that sickenesse
And thus endurynge shalt thou lye
And rise on morowe up erly
Out of thy bed, and harneys the
Or euer dawnyng thou mayst se
Al priuely than shalt thou gone
What whyder it be thy selfe alone
For reyne, or hayle, for snowe, for slete
Thyder the dwelleth, that is so swete
The which may fall a slepe be
And thynketh but lytel upon the
Than shalt thou go, ful soule afferde
Loke if the gate be unsperde
And wayte without in wo and payne
Ful euel a colde in wynde and rayne
Than shalt thou go the doze before
If thou mayste fynde any shore
Or hole, or reste, what euer it were
Than shalt thou stoupe, and lay to eere
If they within a slepe be
I mene al saue thy lady free
Whom wakyng if thou mayst aspye
Go put thy selfe in iupardye
To aske grace, and the hymene
That she may were without were
That thou nyght no rest hast had
So sore for her thou were bestad
Women wel ought pyte to take
Of hem that sorowen for her sake
And loke for loue of that relyke
That thou thynke none other lyke
For whan thou hast so great armey
Shall kysse the er thou go awey
And hold that in ful great deynte
And for that no man shall the se
Before the house, ne in the way
Loke thou be gon agayne er day
Suche commyng, and suche goyng
Suche heuyneſſe, and such walkyng
Maketh louers without any were
Under her clothes pale and lene
For Loue leueth colour ne cleerneſſe
Who loueth trewe hath no fatneſſe
Thou shalt wel by thy selfe se
That thou must nedes assayed be
For men that shape hem other way
Falsely her ladyes for to betray
It is no wonder though they be satte
With falſe othes her loues they gatte
For ofte I se suche losengeours
Fatter than Abottes or priours.
Yet with o thing I the charge
That is to say, that thou be large
Unto the mayde, that her doth seruе
So best her thanke thou shalte deserue
Yeue her gyftes, and get her grace
For so thou may thanke purchace
That she the worthy holde and fre
Thy lady, and al that may the se
Also her seruauntes worshyp aye
And pleaſe as moche as thou maye
Great good through hem may come to the
Bycause with her they ben prime
They shal her tel how they the fande
Curteys and wyſe, and wel doande
And she shal preyse wel the more
Loke out of londe thou be not fore
And if suche cause thou haue, that the
Behoueth to gone out of countre
Leaue hole thyn hert in hostage
Tyl thou agayne make thy passage
Thynke longe to se the swete thing
That hath thine hert in her keping
Now haue I tolde the, in what wyſe
A louer shal do me seruice
Do it than, if thou wolt haue
The mede, that thou after craue.

Whan

When I Love al this had herden me
I said thus, Sir how may it be
That lovers may in such manere
Endure your paine ye have said here
I marvayle me wonder fayne
How any man may lyve or playne
In such payne, and such distresse
In sorow, & thought, & such syghyng
Aye unreleased wo to make
Whether so it be they slepe or wake
In such anoy contynuelly
As helpe me god this me tmayle I
Howe man, but he were made of stele
Myght lyve a moothe, such paynes to fele.

The god of love than said me
Frende, by the fayth I owe to the
May no man have good, but he it bye
A man loveth more tenderlye
The thyng, that he hath bought most dere
For were thou wel without mere
In thanke that thyng is taken more
For which a man hath suffred sore
Certes no wo me may arrayne
Unto the sore of lovers payne
None yuel therto me may amounte
No more than a man counte
The droppes that of the water be
For brte n[illegible] the great see
Thou myg[illegible]t, as the hatines tell
Of hem that with Love dwell
In servitute, for peyne hem sleeth
And that eche wold fle the deeth
And trowe they shulde never escape
Here that hope couth hem make
Glad as man in prison fere
And may not getten for to ete
But barlye bread, and water pure
And lyer thin, vermyn and in ordure
With al this, yet canne be lyve
Good hope such comforte hath him yeve
Which maketh were that he shal be
Delyvered, and come to lyberte,
In fortune is hall trust
Though he lye in strawe or dust
In hope is al his sustenyng
And so for lovers in her werkyng
Which love hath shytte in his prisoun
Good hope, is her saluacioun
Good hope, how sore that they smerte
Pryeth hem both wyl and herte
To prefer her body to martyre
For hope so sore doth hem desyre
To suffre echadversite that men devyse
For love that ever more shal cryse

Hope in desyre catche victory
In hope of love is al the glory
For hope is al your mayntenour
Were hope, there shuld no longer
Dieue of hope, which is desyre lyue
Auaunceth lovers in such mauere
Good hope is curteyse for to please
To kepe lovers from al disease
Hope kepeth his londe, and wol abyde
For any peryl that may betyde
For hope to lovers, as most cheefe
Doth hem endure al myscheefe
Hope is her helpe when myster is
And I shal yeve the the pryis
Thre other thynges, that great solace
Doth to hem that be in my grace
The first good that may be founde
To hem that in my lace be bounde
Is Swete thought, for to recorde
Thyng wherwith thou canst accorde
Best in thine herte, where the be
Thynkyng in absence is good to the
When any lover doth complayne
And lyeth in distresse, and in payne
Than Swete thought shal come as sone
Awaye his angre for to dryue
It maketh lovers to have remembraunce
Of comforte, and of highe plesaunce
That Hope hath highte him for to ma[illegible]
For thought alone than shal be greene
As frere god wot, as he can fynde
To make a myrrour of his mynde
For to beholde he wol not let
Her persone be shal afore him set
Her laughyng eyen persaunt and clere
Her shape, her fasun, her goodly chere
Her mouthe, that is so gracious
So swete, and eke so sauerous
Of al her servyces be shal take hede
His eyen with al her ryalmes fede.

Thus Swete thynkyng shall asswage
The payne of lovers, and her rage
Thy love shal double without gesse
When thou thynkest on her semelynesse
Or of her laughyng, or of her chere
That to the made thy lady dere
This comforte wol I that thou take
And if the nexte thou wolte forsake
Which is not lesse sauerous
Thou shuldest not ben to daungerous

To bring hem out of wo and were
And helpe many a darteleere
And many a lady fine forbete
That haue lowed paraunoure
Through speking, whan they might here
Of her louers to hem so dere
To me it doubteth al her fayrette
The whiche is closed in yet herte
In hert it maketh hem glad and lyghe
Speche whan they mowe haue syghe
And therfore nowe it comeeth to mynde
In olde dawes as I fynde
That clerkes writen that her knewe
There was a lady fresshe of hewe
Whiche of her loue made a songe
On him for to remembre amonge
In which she said, Whan that I here
Speken of him that is so dere
To me it doubteth al smerte
I wys he speketh so nere myne herte
To speke of him at eue or morowe
It cureth me of al my sorowe
To me is none so hyghe plesaunce
As of his person daliaunce
She wost ful wel that where speking
Comforteth in ful moche thing
Her loue she had full well assayde
Of him she was ful wel apayde
To speke of him her loue was set
Therfore I rede the that thou get
A felowe that can wel counceile
And kepe thy counsayle, and wel hele
To whom gothewe holly thyne herte
Both wel and wo, loue and smerte
To get comforte to him thou go
And priuely betwene you two
Ye shall speke of that goodly thyng
That hath thyne herte in her kepyng
Of her beautee and her countenaunce
And of her goodly conuersaunce
Of al thy thought, thou shalt him say
And eke him counsayle howe thou may
Do any thyng that may her plese
For it to hyde shal be grete ese
That he may wete thou send him so
Both of thy wele and of thy wo
And if his herte to loue be ferre
His company is moche the bette
For Reson wol he shewe to the
Al openly his priuyte
And what she is he loueth so
To the playnly he shal bidde
Without byrde of any thynge
Both tel her renome and her name
Than shall he forther ferre and nere
And namely to thy lady dere
In syker wyse, ye euery dele
Shal helpen as his owne brother
In trouthe without doublenesse
And kepen close in sykernesse
For it is noble thyng in fay
To haue a man thou darste say
Thy priuy counsayle euery dele
For that wol comforte the right wele
And thou shalt holde the wel apayed
Whan suche a frende thou hast assayed.

The third good of great comfort
That reuesteth louers most of
Cleth of lighes beholding per
That kepeth is swete lokyng
The which may none ese do
Whan thou art ferre thy lady fro
Wherfore thou preise alway to be
In place, where thou mayst her se
For it is thinge moste amerous
Moste delytable and sauerous
For to asswage a mannes sorow
To sene his lady by the morow
For it is a ful noble thyng
Whan thou euen haue met
With that relyefe precious
Wherof thou be so desyrous
But al day after lothe it is
They haue no bridle to refrayne mys
They dar den nyther grone ne rayne
Ne non other maner payne
For whan they euen were thus in blysse
Yet of her entiere ywysse
Alone they can not haue her ioye
But to the herte they conuoye
Parte of her blysse to him thou sende
Of al this harme to make an ende
The eye is a good messagere
Which can to the hert in suche manere
Tydynges sende, that hardy sone
To voyde him of his perelous wone
Wherof the herte reioyseth so
That a great parte of his wo
Is voyded, and put away to flyght
Right as the derkenesse of the nyght
Is chased with clerenesse of the moone
Right so is al his wo ful soone
Auoyded clene, whan that the syght
Beholde

Beholden may that freshe wight
That the hert desireth so
That al his darkenesse is ago
For thou the herte is al at ese
When they sene that may hem plese
Nowe haue I declared the al out
Of that thou were in drede and doute
For I haue tolde the faythfully
What the may queen verely
And al louers that wol be
Faythful, and ful of stabilite
Good hope alway kepe by thy syde
And swete thought make eke abyde
Swete Lokyng and sweete Speche
Of al thyne harmes they shalbe leche
Of euery thou shalte haue great plesance
Yf thou canst bide in sufferaunce
And serue wel without faintise
Thou shalte be quite of thyne empryse
With more guerdoun, if that thou hyre
But al this ryme this I the yeue.

THe god of Loue whan al ỹ day
Had taught me, as ye haue herd say
And enformed compendously
He vanished away al sodaynly
And I alone lefte al soole
So ful of complaynt and of doole
For I sawe no man ther me by
My woundes me greued wonderly
Before to entren nothing I knewe
Saue the bothum bright of hewe
Wherin was sette holly my thought
Of other comforte knewe I nought
But it were through the god of Loue
I knewe nat ele to my behoue
That might me ease or comfort gette
But if he wolde hym entermette
The roser was bothouten doute
Closed with an hedge without
As ye to forne haue herde me sayne
And fast I beset and wolde fayne
Haue passed the hay, if I might
Haue gotten in by any sleyght
Unto the bothum so fayre to se
But euer I dradde blamed to be
Yf men wolde haue suspection
That I wolde of entencion
Haue stole the roses that there were
Therfore to entre I was in fere
But at the laste, as I bethought
Wether I shoulde passe or nought
I sawe come with a gladde chere
Toward, a lusty bachelere
Of good stature and of good height
And Bialacoil forsothe he height
Sonne he was to Curtesye
And he me greeted ful gladsome
The passage where bet I may
And sayd, Sir: howe that ye may
Passe, if your wyll be
The freshe Roser for to se
And ye the swete sauour fele
Your warrant may right wele
So thou the kepe fro foule
Shal no man do the vilanye
Yf I may helpe you in ought
I shall not fayne, dredeth nought
For I am bounde to your seruyce
Fully denoyde of feruyse
Than vnto Bialacoil sayde I
I thanke you ful hertely
And your behest take at gre
That ye so goodly profre me
To you it cometh of great franchyse
That ye me profre your seruyse
Than afert ful delyuerly
Through the hierre anone went I
Wherof encombred was the haye
I was wel plesed, the sothe to saye
To se the bothum, faire and swete
So freshe sprunge out of the tere

AND Bialacoil me serued wele
Whan I so nighe me myght fele
Of the bothum the swete odoure
And so lusty he wexed of colowre
But than a thefe foule him betyde
Besyde the roses gan hym hyde
To kepe the roses of that Roser
Of whom the name was Daungere
This thefe was hyd there in the greues
Couered with grasse and with leues
To spye and take whom that he founde
Vnto that Roser put an honde
He was nat foole, for ther was no
For with hym were other two
Of wicked maners, and vyl fame
That one was cleped by hys name
Wicked tonge, god yeue hem sorowe
For neither a kenne ne a morowe
He can of no man good speke
On many a fayre man dothe he wreke
There was a woman that eke bygh
Shame, that who can reken right
Trespace was her fathers name

Cc iiii. Her

Her mother Reson, and thus was Shame
Brought of their fine two
And yet had Cupide neuer ado
With Reason, ne neuer lay him by
He was hydous and so vgly
I meane this, that Trespasse hight
But Reason conceyueth of a sight
Shame of that I spake aforne
And when that Shame was thus borne
It was ordayned, that Chastyte
Should of the Roser lady be
Which of the bothums more and las
Vuth sondrie foine assayled was
That she ne wyste what to do
For Vnchastet assayleth so
That nyght and day from her she stall
Bothoms and Roses ouer all
To Reason than prayeth Chastyte
Whom Venus hath sermed ouer the see
That she her doughter wolde her leue
To kepe the Roser fresshe and greue
Anon Reason to Chastyte
Is fully assented, that it be
And graunted her, at her request
That Shame, because she is honest
Shal keper of the Roser be
And thus to kepe it, there were three
That none shulde hardy be ne bolde
(Were he yongr or were he olde)
Ingayne her wyll away to bere
Bothoms ne Roses, that there were
I hadde wel spedde, had I nat beue
Awayted with these three and seue
For Bialacoil, that was so fayre
So gracious and debonnayre
Quite hym to me ful curtesly
And me to please hadde that I
Should drawe to the bothom nere
Where in to touche the Roser
Which bare the roses, he yaue me leue
Thys graunt ne myght but litel greue
And for he sawe it lyked me
Right nygh the bothom pulled he
I leafe al grene, and saue me that
The which ful nygh the bothom sat
I made of that leafe ful queynte
And when I frise I was aqueynte
With Bialacoil and so priue
I wende al my wyl hadde be
That were I hardy for to tell
To Bialacoil howe me befel
Of Loue, that tolde and wounded me
And sayd, sir so mote I the
I may no lay howe in no wyse
Upon no syde, but ye agryse
For sythe (yf I shall not fayne)
In here I haue had so great payne
So great anoye and suche affraye
That I ne wote what I shall saye
I drede your wroth to deserue
Leuer me were, than kynges herue
My body shulde in peces small
Than in any wyse it shulde fall
That ye wrathed shulde hen with me
Say boldely thy wyll (quod he)
I nyl be wrothe if that I maye
For nought that thou shale to me saye.

Than said I sir, not you displese
To know men of my great disese
In which only Loue hathe me
For parties gret, desese & bronght
Fro day to day it doth me dreye (thought
Supposeth not sir, that I lye
In me fyue woundes dyd he make
The sore of whiche shal neuer slake
But ye the bothom graunt me
Which is moste pleasaunt of beaute
My lyfe, my dethe, and my martyre
And treasour that I moste desyre
Than Bialacoil affrayde all
Sayd sir, it may not fall
That ye desyre it may not aryse
What wolde ye shende me in thys wyse
A moder foole than I were
Yf I suffred you away to bere
The fresshe bothom, so fayre of syght
For it were neither skyne nyght
Of the Roser ye broke the ryude
Or take the rose aforne hys kynde
Ye are not curteys to aske it
Let it styl on the Roser syt
And let it growe til it amended be
And perfectly come to beaute
I nolde not that it pulled were
Fro the Roser that it bere
To me it is so lefe and dere
With that anone sterte out Daungere
Out of the place where he was hydde
Hys malyce in his chere was kydde
Ful great he was and blacke of hewe
Sturdy and hydous, who so hym knewe
Lyke sharpe vrchons his heer was grow
His eyen red sparclynge as the fire glow
His nose krounced ful hyzked stode
He come cryande as he were wode

And

And sayde, Bialacoil tel me why
Thou bringest hyder so boldely
Him that so nygh the Rosere
Thou worchest in a wronge manere
He thinketh to dishonour the
Thou art wel worthy to haue maugre
To lette hym of the rosere witte
Who serueth a fellonne is cuyl quitte
Thou woldest haue done great bounte
And he with shame wolde quite the
Flychence felowe, I rede the go
It wanteth lytel he wol the slo
For Bialacoil ne knewe the nought
Whan the to serue he sette his thought
For thou wolt shame him if thou might
Bothe agayne reason and right
I wol no more in the affye
That comest so slyghly for to spye
For it prouyth wonder wele
Thy sleight and trayson euery dele
I durste no more make there abode
For the chorle, he was so wode
So ganne he thrette and manace
And through the hay he dyd me chace
For feare of hym I trembled and quoke
So chorlishly his heed he shoke
And sayde, if ere he might me take
I shulde nat from his hondes scape
Than Bialacoil is fledde and mate
And I al soole and disconsolate
Was lefte alone in payne and thought
Fro shame to dethe I was nigh brought
Than thought on my byghe folye
Howe that my body vtterlye
Was yeue to payne and to martyre
And therto hadde I so great yre
That I ne durst the hayes passe
There was no hope, there was no grace
I trowe neuer man wyste of payne
But he were laced in loues chayne
Ne no man, and sothe it is
But if he loue, what anger is
Loue holdeth his heest to me right wele
Whan payne (he sayde) I shulde fele
No hert may thynke, ne tonge sayne
A quarter of my wo and payne
I myght not with the anger last
Myn hert in poynt was for to brast
Whan I thought on the rose, that so
Was through Daunger calte me fro
A longe whyle stode I in that state
Tyll that me sawe so madde and mate
The lady of the high warde
Which from her toure loked thiderwarde.

Reason men clepe that lady
Whiche from her toure delyuerly
Come downe to me without more
But she was neither yonge ne hore
Ne hygh ne lowe, ne fatte ne lene
But best as it were in a meane
Her eyen two were clere and lyght
As any candell, that brenneth bryght
And on her heed she had a crowne
Her semed wel an hygh persone
For rounde enuyron her crowne
Was ful of erthe stones fyne
Her goodly semblant by deuyse
I trowe was made in paradyse.
For nature had neuer suche a grace
To forge a werke of suche compace
For certayne, but if the letter lye
God hym selfe, that is so hye
Made her after his ymage
And vaste her sythe suche auauntage
That she hath myght and seignorie
To kepe men from al folye
Who so wol trowe her lore
Ne may offenden neuermore.

And whyle I stode this dethe a pase
Reson began to me her rase
She sayde, Alhayle my fayere frende
Fole and childehod wol the shende
And hyche the haue put in great affray
Thou hast bought dere inne of May
That made thyn hert merye to be
In swych tyme thou weuest to se
The gardyn, where of I deuyse
Bare the key and was maystresse
Whan thou yedest in the daunce
Vnder her and had acquayntaunce
Her acquayntaunce is perylous
First softe and after nevous
She hath trasshed without were
The god of Loue had the nat fere
Behynd I deuysse the comyng
In the verge, where Pitth him pleyde
I folye haue supprised the
Do so that it recouered be
And be wel ware to take no more
Counsayle, that greueth after sore
Be is wyse, that wol him selfe chastise
And though a yonge man in any wise
Trespasse amonge, and do folye
Lete hym nat tary, but hastelye

Let hym amende what so be mys
And eke I counsayle the iwys
The god of Loue holly forgete
That hath the in suche payne sette
And the in hert turmented so
I can not sene howe thou maist go
Other wayes to garysoun
For Daungere, that is so felonn
Felly purposeth the to werrey
Whiche is ful cruel the sothe to sey.

And yet of Dãger cometh no blame
In reward of my doughter shame
Whiche hath the Roses in her warde
Is she that may be no musarde
And wicked tonge is with these two
That suffreth no man thyder go
For er a thynge be do be shall
Where that he cometh ouer all
In fourty places, if it be sought
Say thyng þ neuer was don ne wrought
So muche trayson is in hys male
Of falsenesse for to sayne a tale
Thou drest with angry folke ywis
Wherfore to the better is
From these folke away to fare
For they wol make the lyue in care
Thys is the yuel that loue they call
Wherin there is but foly al
For loue is foly euery dell
Who loueth, in no wise may do wel
Ne sette his thought on no good werke
His scole he leseth, yf he be a clerke
Or other crafte eke, if that he be
He shal not thryue therin, for he
In loue shal haue more passyoun
Than Monke, hermyte, or chanoun
This payne is harde out of measure
The loue may eke no whyle endure
And in the possessyon
Is muche trybulacyon
The loue it is so shoure lastyng
And but m hape is the gettyng
For I se there many in trauayle
That at laste foule fayle
I was nothyng thy counsayler
Whan thou were made the homager
Of god of Loue to hastely
There was no wysdom but foly
Thyn herte was ioly, but not sage
Whan thou were brought in such a rage
To yelde the so redely
And to Loue of his great maistry

Rede the Loue away to dryue
That maketh þ reche not of thy
the foli more fro dai to day (liue
Shalgrowe, but þ it put away
Take with thy tethe the bridell faste
To daunt thy hert, and eke the caste
Yf that thou maiste to gette the defence
For to redresse thy first offence
Who so hys hert alway wol leue
Shal fynde amonge that shal him greue

Whan I her herde thus me chastice
I answerde in ful angry wyse
I prayde her cesse of her speche
Eyther to chastyce me or teche
To bydde me my thought refreyne
Which Loue hath caught in his demeyne
What wene ye Loue wol consente
(That me assayleth with bowe bente)
To drawe myn hert out of his honde
Whiche is so quickly in his bonde
That ye counsayle may neuer be
For whan he first arested me
He toke myne herte so sore hym tyl
That it is nothyng at my wyl
He thought it so him for to obey
That he it sparred with a key
I praye you let me be al styl
For ye may wel, yf that ye wyll
Your wordes waste in ydelnesse
For vtterly, withouten gesse
Al that ye sayne is but in vayne
Me were leuer dye in the payne
Than Loue to me warde shulde atrete
Falshede or treson on me sette
I wol me get prys or blame
And loue trewe to saue my name
Who that me chastiseth, I hym hate
With that worde Reson went her gate
Whan she sawe for no sermonyng
She might me fro my foly bryng
Than dismayed I left al soole
For wery, for wandred as a foole
For I ne knewe no cheryssaunce
Than fel in to my remembraunce
Howe Loue badde me to puruey
A felowe, to whom I might sey
My counseyle and my priuyte
For that shulde muche auayle me
With that bethought I me, that I
Had a felowe fast by
Trewe and syker, curteys, and hende
And he called was by name a frende

Ther wer felowe was no where none
To baste to hym I went anone
And to hym al my wo I tolde
Fro hym tyght nought I wold withholde
I tolde hym al without were
And made my compleynt on Daungere
Howe for to sey he was hydous
And to me warde contrarious
The whiche through hys cruelte
Was in poynt to haue meymed me
With Bialacoil whan he me sey
Within the gardyn walke and pley
Fro me he made hym for to go
And I be left alone in wo
I durst no lenger with hym spekе
For Daunger sayde he wolde be wrekе
Whan that he sawe howe I went
The freshe bothom for to hent
If I were hardy to come nere
Hyr wene the hay and the Roseere.

This frende whan he wist of my thought
He discomforted me tyght nought
But sayde felowe, be nat so madde
Ne so abashed nor bestadde
Hy self I knowe ful wel Daungere
And howe he is fiers of chere
At prime temps, I loue to manace
Ful ofte I haue ben in hys cace
I flon first though that he be
After thou shalte hym souple se
Of longe passed I knewe hym wele
Ungoodly first though men him fele
He wol meke after in hys bearynge
Ben, for seruyce and obeysynge
I shal the tel what thou shalt do
Hekely I rede thou go hym to
Of hert praye hym specyally
Of thy trespace to haue mercy
And hote hym wel here to plese
That thou shalt neuer more hym displese
Who can best serue of flatery
Shal please Daunger moste swerly.

My frende hath sayde to me so wele
That he me eased hath somdele
And eke allegged of my turment
For through hym had I hardement
Ageyne to Daunger for to go
To prue yf I myght meke hym so.

To Daunger came I al ashamed
The which alone me had blamed
Defyynge for to pese my wo
But ouer hedge durst I nat go
For he forbode me the passage
I founde hym cruel in hys cage
And in his honde a great burdon
To hym I kneled lo me adown
Ful meke of porte, and symple of chere
And sayd sir, I am comen here
Onely to aske of you mercy
That greueth me ful greatly
That euer my lyfe I wrathed you
But for to amende I am come now
With al my might, bothe loude and stil
To done right at your owne wyl
For Loue made me for to do
That I haue trespassed hyderto
Fro whom I ne may withdraw min herte
Yet shal I neuer for ioy ne smert
(What so befall good or yl)
Offende more ageyne your wyll
Leuer I haue endure disease
Than do that shulde you displease.

You requyre, I praye that ye
Of me haue mercy and pyte
To synne your vse greueth so
That I wol swere for euermo
To be redressed at your lykyng
Yf I trespace in any thyng
Saue that I pray the graunt me
A thyng, that may nat warned be
That I may loue al onely
None other thyng of you aske I
I shal done al wel ynowe
Yf of your grace ye graunt me this
And ye may nat letten me
For wel were ye that loue is fre
And I shal louen suche that I wyl
Who euer lyke it wel or yl
And verne wolde I for al Fraunce
Do thyng to do you displesaunce.

Than Daunger tyl in his entente
For to forgyue his male talent
But al hys wrathe yet at last
He hath released, I prayed so fast
Shortly (he sayde) thy request
Is nat to moche dishonest
Ne I wol nat werne it the
For yet nothyng engreueth me
For though thou loue thus euer mo

To

To me is neither softe ne soze
Lone where þ the lyst, what retcheth me
So ferre fro my Roses be
Trust not on me foz none assay
In any tyme to passe the bay
Thus hath he graunted my prayere
Then went I forth withouten were
Unto my frende, and tolde hym al
Whiche was tyght ioyful of my tale
(He sayde nowe gothe wel thyne affayze
He shal to the be debonayze
Though he afore was dispitous
He shal hereafter be gracious
Yf he were touched on some good beyne
He shulde yet retwen on thy peyne
Suffer I rede, and no boost make
Tyl thou at good mes maist him take
By suffraunce, and wozdes softe
A man may ouercome ofte
Him, that afozne he had in dzede
In bokes sothly as I rede
Thus hath my frend with great comfozt
Auaunced me with hyghe disport
Whiche wouldc me good, as muche as I
And than anone ful so daynly
I roke my leaue, and streight I went
Unto the bay foz great talent
I hadde to sene the freshe bothom
Wherin lay my saluacyon
And Daunger toke kepe, if that I
Kepe hym couenaunt trewely
So sozt I dzede hys manasyng
I durst not breke hys byddyng
Foz lest that I were of hym sheut
I brake not hys commaundemen
Foz to purchase hys good wyll
It was foz to come there eyll
His mercy was to ferre behynde
I kept, foz I ne might it fynde
I complayned and syghed sozе
And languyshed euermoze
Foz I durst nat ouer go
Unto the rose I loued so
Throughout my demyng vtterly
That he had knowlege certaynely
Than Loue me ladde in suche wyse
That in me there was no feynтyse
Falsheed, ne no trechery
And yet he ful of vyllany
Of disdayne, and cruelte
On me ne wolde haue pyte
Hys cruel wyl foz to refrayne
Tho I wepte alway, and me complayne.

And while I was in this turmẽt
Wel come of grace, by god sent
Fraunchise, & with her pyte
Fulfylde the bothom of bounte
They go to Daunger anone tyght
To fozther me with al her myght
And helpe in wozde and in dede
Foz wel they sawe that it was nede
First of her grace dame Fraunchise
Hath taken of thys empryse
She sayd, Daunger great wzonge ye do
To wozche thys man so muche wo
Oz pynen hym so angerly
It is to you great vyllany
I can not se, why ne how
That he hath trespassed agayne you
Saue that he loueth, wherefoze ye shulde
The moze in cherete of him holde
The force of loue maketh hym do this
Who wolde hym blame he dyd amis
He leseth moze than he may do
Hys payne is harde, ye may se so
And Loue in no wyse wolde consent
That ye haue power to repent
Foz though that quicke ye wolde him sle
Fro Loue hys hert maye nat go
Nowe swere sir, it is your ease
Hym foz to anger oz displease
Alas, what may it you auaunce
To done to hym so great greuaunce
What worshyp is it agayne hym take
Oz on your man a werre make
Sithe he so lowely euery wyse
Is redy, as ye luste deuyse
Yf Loue haue caught hym in his lace
You foz to bey in euery caas
And ben your subiect at your wyl
Shulde ye therfoze wyllen him yl
Ye shulde hym spare moze al out
Than him that is bothe proude and stout
Curtesye wolde that ye succoure
Hem, that ben meke vnder your cure
His hert is harde that wol not meke
Whan men of mekenesse hym beseke.

This is certayne, sayde Pyte
We se ofte that humylyte
Bothe yze, and also felony
Uenquisheth, & also melancoly
To stonde forth in suche dureste
This cruelte and wickednesse
Wherfoze I pray you sir Daungere
Foz to mayntene no lenger here

Suche

Suche cruel werre agayne your man
Is holly yours as euer he can
Nor that ye worchen no more wo
Upon this caytife, that languisheth so
Which wol no more to you trespace
But put him holly in your grace
His offence ne was but lyte
The god of Loue it was to wite
That he your thral so greatly is
And yf ye harme him ye done amis
For he hath had ful harde penaunce
Sith that ye refte him thaqueyntaunce
Of Bialacoil, his moste ioye
Whiche al his paynes might acoye
He was before anoyed sore
But than ye doubled him wel more
For he of blysse hath ben ful bare
Sith Bialacoil was fro him fare
Loue hath to him great distresse
He hath no nede of more duresse
Voydeth from him your yre I rede
Ye may not winnen in this dede
Beleeth Bialacoil repayre agayne
And haueth pitie vpon his payne
For Fraunchyse wol, and I Pyte
That mercyful to him ye be
And sithe that she and I accorde
Haue vpon him misericorde
For I you pray, and eke moneste
Nought to refusen our requeste
For he is harde, and fel of thought
That for vs two wol do right nought
Daunger ne might no more endure
He meked him vnto mesure.

I wol in no wise, saith Daungere
Deny, that ye haue asked here
It were to great vncurtesye
I wol ye haue the companye
Of Bialacoil, as ye deuyse
I wol him let in no wise
To Bialacoil than went in hye
Fraunchise, and sayd full curteisye
Ye haue to longe, be deignous
Vnto this louer, and daungerous
Fro him to withdrawe your presence
Whiche hath do to him great offence
That ye not wolde vpon him se
Wherfore a sorowfull man is he
Shape ye to pay him, and to please
Of my loue if ye wol haue ease
Fulfyll his will, sithe that ye knowe
Daunger is daunted and brought lowe
Throughe helpe of me and of Pyte
You dare no more aferde be
I shal do right as ye wyll
Saith Bialacoil, for it is skyll
Sith Daunger wol that it so be
Than Fraunchise hath him sent to me

BYalacoil at the begynning
Salued me in his comming
No straungenes was in him sen
No more thā he ne had wtarbed
As fayre semblaunt thā shewed he me ben
And goodly, as afore bydde
And by the honde without doute
Within the haye right al aboute
He lad me with right good chere
Al enuyron the vergere
That Daungere had me chased fra
Now haue I leaue ouer al to go
Nowe am I raysed at my deuyse
Fro hel vnto paradyse
Thus Bialacoil of gentylnesse
With all his payne and besynesse
Hath shewed me onely of grace
The estres of the swote place
I sawe the Rose whan I was nygh
Was greatter woxen, and more hygh
Freshe, roddy, and fayre of hewe
Of colours euer yliche newe
And whan I had it longe sene
I sawe that through the leues grene
The Rose spred to spannyshynge
To sene it was a goodly thynge
But it ne was so sprede on brede
That men within myght knowe the sede
For it couerte was and close
Both with the leues and with the rose
The stalke was euen and grene vpright
It was theron a goodly syght
And well the better without wene
For the seed was not sene
Ful fayre it sprad the god of blysse
For suche another, as I gesse
Ysowne ne was ne more vermayle
I was abawed for marueyle
For euer the fayrer that it was
The more I am bounden in loues laas
Longe I abode there sothe to saye
Til Bialacoil I gan to praye
Whan that I sawe him in no wyse
To me warnen his seruyce
That he me wolde graunt a thynge
Whiche to remembre is wel sytting

This is to saine, that of his grace
He wolde me yeue leysar and space
To me that was so desyrous
To haue a kyssyng precyous
Of the goodly freshe Rose
That so swetely smelleth in my nose
For if it you displeased nought
I wold gladly, as I haue sought
Haue a kisse therof freely
Of your perte, for certaynly
I wot none haue, but by your leue
So lothe me were you for to greue

He sayd, frende so god me spede
Of Chastite I haue suche drede
Thou shuldest not warned be for me
But I dare not for Chastite
Ageyne her dare I not mysdo
For alway byddeth she me so
To yeue no louer leaue to kysse
For who therto may wynnen ywisse
He of the surplus of the praye
Wyl lyke in hope to get some daye
For who so kyssynge may attayne
Of Loues payne hath (soth to sayne)
The best and most auenaunt
And ernest of the remenaunt.

Of his answere I syghed sore
I durst assaye him tho no more
I had suche drede to greue him aye
I man shulde not to muche assaye
To chafe his frende out of measure
Nor put his life in auenture
For no man at the first stroke
He may not fel downe an oke
Nor of the reysyns haue the wyne
Tyll grapes be ripe and wel a fyne
Be sore empressed, I you ensure
And drawen out of the pressure
But I forpeyned wonder stronge
Though that I abode right longe
After the kysse, in payne and wo
Sith I to kysse desyred so
Tyl that remynge on my distresse
There come Uenus the goddesse
(Which aye werreyeth Chastite)
Came of her grace to socour me
Whose might is know ferre and wyde
For she is mother of Cupyde.

The god of Loue, blynde as stone
That helpeth louers many one
This lady brought in her right honde
Of brennyng fyre a blasyng bronde
Wherof the flame and hote fyre
Hath many a lady in desyre
Of Loue brought, and sore hette
And in her seruice her hert is sette
This lady was of good entayle
Right wonderful of apparayle
By her atyre so bright and shene
Men might perceyue well and sene
She was not of Relygioun
Nor I nyl make mencyoun
Nor of robe, nor of tresour
Of broche, neither of her riche attour
Ne of her gyrdel about her syde
For that I nyl not longe abyde
But knoweth wel, that certainly
She was arrayed richely
Deuoyde of pride certayne she was
To Bialacoil she went a paas
And to him shortely in a clause
She said, sir: what is the cause
Ye ben of porte so daungerous
Unto this louer, and daynous
To graunt him nothyng but a kysse
To warne it him ye done amysse
Sithe wel ye wot, howe that he
Is Loues seruaunt, as ye may se
And hath beaute, wherthrough is
Worthy of Loue to haue the blys
Howe he is semely beholde and se
Howe he is fayre, howe he is free
Howe he is swote, and debonayre
Of age yonge, lusty, and fayre
There is no lady so hawtayne
Ducheesse, counteesse, ne chastelayne
That I nolde holde her vngoodly
For to refuse him vtterly
His brethe is also good and swete
And eke his lyppes roddy and mete
Onely to playne, and to kysse
Graunt him a kysse of gentylnysse
His teth arne also white and clene
Me thinketh wronge withouten wene
If ye nowe warne him, trusteth me
To graunt that a kysse haue he
The lasse ye helpe him that ye haste
And the more tyme shul ye waste
Whan the flame of the very bronde
That Uenus brought in her ryght honde
Had Bialacoil with his hete smete
Anone he bad me withouten lete
Graunt to me the Rose kysse

Than

Than of my payne I ganne to lysse
And to the Rose anon went I
And kyssed it ful fayrhfully
There nede no mā aske, if I was blythe
When the sauour softe and lythe
Stroke to myne hert without moze
And me allegged of my soze
So was I ful of ioye and blysse
It is fayze suche a floure to kysse
It was so swote and sauerous
I might not be so anguyshous
That I mote glad and ioly be
When that I remembre me
Yet euer among sothly to sayne
I suffre noye and moche payne.

The see may neuer be so styll
That with a lytel wynde at wyll
Ouer whelme and tourne also
As it were woode in wawes go
After the calme the trouble soone
Mote folowe, and chaunge as the moone
Right so fareth Loue, that selde in one
Holdeth his ancre, for right anone
When they in ease wene best to lyue
They ben with tempest all fordryue
Who serueth Loue, can tel of wo
The stoundmele ioye mote ouergo
Nowe he hurteth, and nowe he cureth
For selde in o poynte loue endureth.

Now is it right me to procede
Howe Shame gan medle and take hede
Though whom fel angres I haue hade
And howe the strong wal was made
And the castell of brede and length
That god of Loue wan with his strength
All this in Romance wil I set
And for no thyng me wyll I let
So that it lykyng to her be
That is the floure of beaute
For she may best my labour quite
That I for her loue shal endyte
Wicked tonge that the couyne
Of euery louer can deuyne
Worse, and addeth more foindele
(For wicked tonge sayth neuer wele)
To mewarde bare he right great hate
Espyeng me erly and late
Tyl he hath sene the great chere
Of Bialacoil and me yfere
He might not his tonge withstonde
Worse to reporte than he fonde
He was so ful of cursed rage
It sat him wele of his lynage
For him an Irisshe woman bare
His tonge was fyled sharpe & square
Poignaunt and right kerying
And wonder bytter in spekyng
For whan that he me gan espye
He swore affirming sykerly
Bytwene Bialacoil and me
Was ryel aquayntaunce and priue
He spake therof so folilye
That he awaked Ielousye
Which al afrayed in his rysyng
When that he herde tangling
He ran anon as he were wode
To Bialacoil there that he stode
Which had leuer in this caas
Haue ben at Reynes or Amyas
For fore bore in his felonye
To him thus said Ielousye
Why hast thou ben so negligent
To kepen, whan I was absent
This berger here lefte in thy warde
To me thou haddest no regarde
To trust to thy confusyon
Him thus, to whom suspection
I haue right great, for it is nede
It is wel shewed by the dede
Great faute in the nowe haue I founde
By god anon thou shalte be bounde
And faste locke in a toure
Without refuyte or socoure.

For shame to long hath he the fro
Ouer soone she was ago
When thou hast lost bothe drede & fere
It semed wel she was not here
She was besy in no wyse
To kepe the and chastice
And for to helpen Chastite
To kepe the Roser, as thynketh me
For than this boye knaue so boldly
He should nat haue be hardy
In this berge had suche game
Which now me tourneth to great shame.

Bialacoil myst what to save
Ful fayne he wold haue fled awaye
For feare hath hyd, nere that he
Al sodainly toke him with me
And whan I sawe he had so
This Ielousye take vs two
I was astoned, and knewe no rede

But fledde away for very drede.

Than Shame came forth ful symply
She wende haue treaspaced ful greatly
Humble of her porte, and made it symple
Wearyng a vayle in stede of wymple
As nonnes done in her abbey
By cause her herte was in affray
She gan to speke within a throwe
To Jelousye, right wonder lowe
First of his grace she besought
And said sir, ne leueth nought
Wicked tonge, that false espye
Which is so glad to farne and lye
He hath you made, through flatteryng
On Bialacoil a false leasyng
His falsnesse is not nowe a newe
It is to longe that he him knewe
This is not the fyrst daye
For wicked tonge hath custome aye
Yonge folkes to bewrye
And false lesynges on hem lye

Yet neuertheleſſe I se amonge
That the loigne it is so longe
Of Bialacoil, herres to lure
In Loues seruice for to endure
Drawyng suche folke him to
That he hath nothyng with to do
But in sothnesse I trowe nought
That Bialacoil had euer in thought
To do trespace or vilanye
But for his mother Curtesye
Hath taught him euer to be
Good of aqueyntaunce and priue
For he loueth none heuynesse
But mirthe and play, and all gladnesse
He hateth al trechours
Soleyne folke and enuyous
For ye weten howe that he
Wol euer glad and ioyful be
Honestly with folke to pley
I haue be negligent in good fey
To chastyse him, therfore nowe I
Of herte I crye you here mercy
That I haue ben so recheles
To tamen hym withouten lees
Of my foly I me repente
Now wol I hole set myn entente
To kepe both low and styll
Bialacoil to do your will
Shame Shame (said Jelousy)
To be bytrached great drede haue I
Lecherye hath clombe so hye
That almost blered is myn eye
No wonder is, if that drede haue I
Ouer al reigneth lechery
Whose myght groweth nyght and dey
Both in cloyster and in abbey
Chastite is werried ouer all
Therfore I wol with syker wall
Close bothe roses and rosere
I haue to longe in this manere
Lefte hem vnclosed wylfully
Wherfore I am right inwardly
Sorowful, and repent me
But nowe they shall no lenger be
Vnclosed, and yet I drede sore
I shal repent ferthermore
For the game goeth all amys
Counsayle I must newe ywys
I haue to longe trusted the
But nowe it shal no lenger be
For he may best in euery coste
Disceyue, that men trusten moste
I se wel that I am myghe shent
But if I set my ful entent
Remedy to puruey
Wherfore close I shall the wey
From hem that woll the rose espye
And come to wayte me bylonye
For in good faythe and in trouthe
I woll not let for no slouthe
To lyue the more in sykernesse
Do make anon a fortresse
Than close the roses of good sauour
In myddes shal I make a tour
To put Bialacoil in prison
For euer I drede me of treson
I trowe I shal him kepe so
That he shal haue no might to go
Aboute to make companye
To hem that thinke of vilanye
Ne to no suche as hath bene here
Afore, and founde in him good chere
Whiche han assayled him to shende
And with her trowandise to blende
A foole is eyth to begyle
But may I lyue a lytel whyle
He shal forthynke his fayre semblaunt
And with ꝑ worde came Drede anaunt
Whiche was abashed, and in great fere
When he wyste Jelousye was there
He was for drede in suche affray
That not a worde durste he say
But quakyng stode ful styl alone

Tyll

(Tyl Jelousye his way was gone)
Saue Shame, that him not forsoke
Both Drede and the frl sore quoke
That at last Drede abrayde
And to his cosyn Shame sayde

Shame (he sayd) in sothfastnesse
To me it is great heynesse
That the noyse so ferre is go
And the sclaunder of vs two
But sythe that it is befall
We may it not agayne call
When ones spronge is a fame
For many a yere withouten blame
We haue ben, and many a day
For many an Apryll, and many a May
We han passed, not shamed
Tyl Jelousye hath vs blamed
Of mystruste and suspection
Causelesse, without enchesson
Go we to Daunger hastely
And let vs shewe him openly
That he hath not a ryght wrought
When that he set not his thought
To kepe better the purprise
In his doyng he is not wise
He hath to vs do great wronge
That hath suffred now so longe
Bialacoil to haue hys wyll
Al his lustes to fulfyll
He must amende it vtterly
Or els shal he vilaynously
Cryed be out of this londe
For be the werre may not withstonde
Of Jelousye, nor the grefe
Sythe Bialacoil is at mischefe.

TO Daunger Shame & Drede anon
The right way ben gon
The chorle they founde hem afore
Lyggyng vnder an hawethorne
Vnder his heed no pylowe was
But in the stede a trusse of gras
He stombred, and a nappe he toke
Tyl Shame pitously him shoke
And great manace on him gan make
Why slepest thou, whan thou shuld wake
(Quod Shame) thou dost vs vylanye
Who trusteth the, he doth folye
To kepe roses or bothoms
When they ben fayre in her sesons
Thou art wore to kampliere
Where thou shuld be straunge of chere
Stoute of thy porte, redy to greue
Thou dorst great folye for to leue
Bialacoil here inne to call
The yonger man, to shenden vs all
Though that thou slepe, we may here
Of Jelousye great noyse here
Art thou now late, rise vp an hye
And stoppe sone and dely uerly
All the gappes of the hay
Do no fauour, I the pray
It falleth nothyng to thy name (blame
To make fayre semblant, where he may se

IF Bialacoil be swerte and free
Logged & fel thou shuldest be
Froward and outragyous twis
I chorle chaungeth the curretys us
This haue I herde ofte in sayeng
That man may for no daunteyng
Make a sperhauke of a bosarde
Al men wol holde the for musarde
That debonayre haue founden be
It syteth the nought curreys to be
To do men pleasaunce or seruyse
In the it is recreaundyse
Let thy werkes ferre and nere
Be lyke thy name, whiche is Daunger
Than al abashed in shewyng
Anon spake Drede, right thus sayeng
And sayd, Daunger I drede me
That thou ne wolte besy be
To kepe that thou hast to kepe
When thou shuldest wake, thou art a slepe
Thou shalt be greued certaynly
If the aspye Jelousy
Or if he fynde the in blame
He hath to day assayled Shame
And chased away, with greate manace
Bialacoil out of this place
And sweareth shortly that he shall
Enclose him in a sturdy wall
And al is for thy wickednesse
For that thy fayleth straunge mekenesse
Thine herte I trowe be fayled al
Thou shalt repente in speciall
If Jelousye the sothe knewe
Thou shalt forthynke, and sore rewe.

WIth þ the chorle his cloke gan shake
Frownyng his eyen gan to make
And hydous cherr, as man in rage
For yre he brent in his visage
When that he herde him blamed so

He said, out of my wytte I go
To be discomfyte I haue great wrongе
Certes I haue no wele ywis to longe
Sithe I may not this closet scape
Al quicke I wolde be bolsen depe
Yf any man shal mote repayre
In to this garden for ought or fayre
Myne hert for vre gothe a fere
That I let any entre here
I haue do folly nowe I se
But nowe it shal amended be
Who setteth fote here any more
Truly he shall repent it sore
For no man more in to this place
Of me to entre shall haue grace
Lever I had with swerdes rwayne
Throughout myn hert, in every payne
Perced to be, with many a wounde
Than slouthe shulde in me be founde
From hensforth by nyght or day
I shall defende it if I may
Withouten any exception
Of ech manet condiction
And if I it any man graunte
Holdeth me for recreaunte.

THo Daunger on his fete gan stode
And bent a bardon in his honde
Wel he in his ire ne lefte he nought
But through the berger he hath sought
If he myght fynde hole or trace
Where throuz that me most forth by pace
Or any gappe, he did it close
That no man might touche a rose
Of the roser al about
He shytteth every man without
Thus day by day Daunger is werse
More wonderful and more dyuers
And fellier eke, than euer he was
For him ful oft I synge alas
For I ne may nought, through his yre
Recouer that I moste desyre
Myne hert alas, wo betyde two
For Bialacoil I wrat hede so
For certaynly in every membre
I quake, whan I me remembre
Of the bothom, whiche I wolde
Ful ofte a day sene and beholde
And whan I thynke upon the kysse
And how moche love and blysse
I had through the sauour swete
For want of it I grone and grete
Me thynketh I fele yet in my nose
The swete sauour of the rose
And now I wote that I wote go
So feruent the sothe I dare sey
To me ful welcome were the dethe
Absence therof alas, me sleeth
For whylom with this Rose, alas
I touched mouth, mouthe, and face
But now the berd I must abyde
But Loue conforte me therbyde
That ones I couthe may and kysse
I trowe my payne shal neuer lysse
Theron is all my couerysse
Which brent myne hert in many wyse
Now shal repayre agayne sythyng
Long watche on myghtes, & no slepyng
Thought in wythyng, turment, and wo
With many a tumyng to and fro
That halfe my payne I can not tell
For I am fallen in to hell
From paradyse and welthe, the more
My turment greueth more, and more
Anoyeth now the bytternesse
That I tofore haue felte swetnesse
And wicked tonge, through his falsshede
Causeth al my wo and drede
On me he leyeth a pytous charge
Bycause his tonge was to large.

Now it is tyme shortly that I
Tel you somthyng of Jelousy
That was in great suspeccion
Abouт him lefte he no mason
That stone couthe lave, ne querrour
He hyred hem to make a tour
And first the roses for to kepe
Abouт hem made he a diche depe
Right wonder large, and also blode
Upon the whiche also stode
Of squared stone, a sturdy wall
Whiche on a craggy was founded all
And right great thicknesse eke it bare
Abouт it was foundeb square
An hundred fadome on euery syde
It was al syche longe and wyde
Lest any tyme it were assayed
Ful wel about it was barayed
And rounde emyron the were set
Ful many a riche and fayre bouret
At euery corner of this wall
Was set a tour ful pryncipall
And eurythe had without fable
A portcolyse defensable
To kepe of enemyes, and to greue

That

That there her force woldē preue
And eke ymyddē thys purpryse
Was made a toure of great mauryse
A fayrer sawgh no man with yghe
Large and wyde, and of great myght
They dyddē none assaute
Of grynne, gonne, nor shaffaut
Theempayre of the mozere
Was made of lyme wonder dere
Of quicke lyme persawnt and egre
The whiche was tempred with vinegre
The stone was harde of adamant
Wherof they made the foundemant
The toure was rounde made in compas
And this wayde no rycher was
Ne better ordayned there withal
Abouten the toure was made a wal
So that bet wyre that and the toure
Roses were set of swete fauoure
With many roses that they bere
And eke within the castel were
Springoldes, gonnes, bowes, & archers
And eke about at corners
Men seyne ouer the wal stonde
Great engynes, who were nere honde
And in the kernels here and there
Of assaylers great plente were
None armour might her stroke withstōde
It were folye to preache to honde
Without the dyche were lystes made
With wal betayled large and brade
For men and horse shulde not atwynne
To myght the dyche ouer the playne
Thus wlonsy doth enuyron
Here about hys garnyson
With walles rounde, and dyche depe
Only the Roser for to kepe
And Daunger erly and late
The keyes kept of the vtter gate
The whiche opened toward the est
And he had with hym at lest
Thurty seruauntes echone by name
That other gate kept Shame
Whiche opened, as it was couthe
Toward the parte of the southe
Her graunted assigned were her to
Fals semblaunt, her wyl for to do
Than drede had in her baylyue
The kepyng of the contrabaylye
Toward the northe I vnderstonde
That opened vpon the lefte honde
The whiche for nothyng may be lure
But yf she do besy cure
Erly ou nozte we, and al to late
Strongly to shette and barre the gate
Of euery thynge that she may se
Drede is afrede, where so he be
For with a puffe of lyte wynde
Drede is astonyed in her mynde
Therfore for shutyng of the yate
I rede her nat the yate vnclose
Foules dyght wolde make her dre
And eke a shadowe vsshe vse

Than Reason had ronge full of euyl
With sondrey of Beauuaise
As he that causeth all dysease
Was keper of the fourthe gate
And also to the tother that
He went ful ofte for to se
What hys lorde was to make a myght
Hys instrumentes wolde he dyght
For to blowe and make solowe
Ofter than he hath cause coude
And walken vpon the wal
Corners and shickettes ouer al
Ful narowe serchen and espye
Though he nought fonde, yet wolde he lye
Dissemblaunt euer fro armonye
And dyscorded from melodye
Contrarie he wolde, and foule farle
With hornpypes of Cornwayle
In flowres made he dilludaunce
And in his musyke with meschaunce
He wolde seyne vnto notes newe
That he fonde no woman trewe
Ne that he sawe neuer in hys lyfe
Vnto her husbonde a trewe wyfe
Ne none so ful of honeste
That she ne wolde laugh and merye be
Whan that she herde or may espye
A man spoken of lecherye
Euerych of hem hath some vyce
One is dishoneste, another is nyce
Yf one be ful of vylanye
Another hath a foolhardye
If one be ful of wanchancle
Another is a clyn dere fle.

Thus wythe Reason, god wote yf shame
Can put hem euerychone in blame
Without cleare and euydente
Be lyeth, though they hem greue
I haue pere no fewe the fyonde
That waketh bothe erly and late
To innocentes doth suche grefaunce

I pray god yeue hym yuel chaunce
That he euer so besy is
Of any woman to seyne amys
Eke Ielousye god confounde
That hath made a toure so rounde
And made about a garyson
To serre Bialacoil in prison
The whiche is serre there in the toure
Ful longe to holde there soiour
There for lyue in penaunce
And for to do hym more greuaunce
Whiche hath ordayned Ielousye
In olde wecke for to espye
The maner of hys gouernaunce
The whiche beuyl in her enfaunce
Had lerned of loues arte
And of his pleys toke her parte
She was except in hys scrupse
She knewe eche wrenche and euery gyse
Of Loue, and euery whyle
It was harde her to begyle
Of Bialacoil she toke aye hede
That euer he liueth in wo and drede
He kepte hym cose and eke prime
Lest in hym she had hadde se
Any foly countenaunce
For she knewe al the olde daunce
And after this whan Ielousye
Had Bialacoil in hys baylye
And shette hym vp that was so fre
For sure of hym he wolde be
He trusteth sore in hys castell
The stronge werke hym lyketh well
He dradde nat that no glorous
Shulde steale his Roses or bocboms
The roses weren assured al
Defenced with the stronge wal
Nowe Ielousye ful wel may be
Of dede beuoyde in lyberte
Whether that he slepe or wake
For of hys roses may none be take.

But alas nowe morne shal
I cause I was without ꝑwal
Ful mucle dole a mone I made
Who had wyst what wo I had
I trowe he wolde haue had pyte
Loue to dere had solde me
The good that of hys loue had I
I went about it al queyntly
But nowe through dubbing of my payne
Se he wolde sel agayne
And me a newe bargayne lere
The whiche al out the more is dere
For the solace that I haue lorne
Than I had it neuer aforne
Certayne I am ful lyke in dede
To hym that caste in erthe hys sede
And hath ioy of the newe spryngt
Whan it greneth in the gynnyng
And is also fayre and freshe of floure
Lusty to sene, swote of odoure
But er he it in sheues shere
May fal a whether that shal it dere
And make it to fade and fal
The stalke, the greyne, and floures al
That to the tylers is foredone
The hope that he had to sone
I drede certayne that so fare I
For hope and trauayle sykerly
Ben me byrafte al with a storme
The floure nyl seden of my corne
For Loue hath so anaunced me
Whan I began my prikyne
To Bialacoil al for to tell
Whom I ne founde frowarde ne fel
But toke agree al hole my play
But loue is of so harde assay
That al at ones he reued me
Whan I went best abouen to haue be
It is of loue, as of fortune
That chaungeth oft, and nyl contune
Whiche whilom wol on folke smyle
And glombe on hem another while
Nowe frende, nowe foe, shalte her fro
For a twynclyng turneth her whele
She canne writhe her heed away
This is the concourse of her play
She can areyse that dothe mourne
And whyle adowne and ouer tourne
Who syttech best, but as her lust
A foole is he that wol her trust
For it is I that am come downe
Through charge and reuolucyon
Sithe Bialacoil more fro me twynne
Shette in the prison ponde withinne
Hys absence at myne herte I fele
For al my ioy and al myne hele
Was in hym, and in the Rose
That but you wol, which hym doth close
Open, that I may hym se
Loue wol not that I cured be
Of the paynes that I endure
Nor of my cruel auenture.

Ah, Bialacoil myn owne dere
Though ꝑ be nowe a ꝓisonere
Kepe at leest thyn hert to me
And suffer not ꝑ it daunted be
Ne let not iclousye in hys rage
Putten thyne hert in no seruage
Although he chastice the without
And make thy body vnto hym lout
Haue hert as harde as diamaunt
Stedfast, and naught plyaunt
In prison though thy body be
At large kepe thyn herte free
Arewe hert wyl not plye
For no manace that it may drye
If Jelousye dothe the payne
Quite hym hys while thus agayne
Con enge the at leest in thought
If other way thou maist nought
And in this wyse subtellye
Worche, and wynne the maistrye
But yet I am in great affray
Lest thou do nat as I say
I drede thou canst me great maugre
That thou enprisoned art for me
But that nat for my trespace
For through me neuer discouered was
Yet thyng, that ought be secre
Ne el more amoye is in me
Than is in the of thys mischaunce
For I endure more harde penaunce
Than any can sayne or thynke
That for the sorowe almoste I synke
When I remembre me of my wo
Ful nygh out of my wytte I go.
Inwarde myn herte I fele blede
For comfortlesse the dethe I drede
Owe I nat wel to haue distresse
When false, through her wickednesse
And traytours, that arne envyous
To noyen me, be so corragyous
Ah, Bialacoil ful wel I se
That they hem shape to deceyue the
To make the burnin to her lawe
And with her corde the to drawe
Where so hem lust, right at her wyl
I drede they haue the brought there tyll
Without comforte, thought me sleeth
This game wol bring me to my dethe
For yf your good wyl I lese
I more be dred I may not chese
And if that thou forgete me
Myn hert shal neuer in lykyng be
For elsewhere fynde solace
If I be put out of your grace
As it shal neuer ben I hoope
Than shulde I fal in wanhope
Alas, in wanhope: nay parde
For I wol neuer dispeyred be
Yf hope me fayle, than am I
Ungracious and vnworthy
In hope I wol comforted be
For Loue, whan he betaught her me
Sayd, that hope where so I go
Shulde aye be relees to my wo
But what and she my bales bete
And be to me curteys and swete
She is in nothyng ful certayne
Louers she put in ful great payne
And maketh hem with wo to dele
Her fayre behest deceyueth fele
For she wol behote sykerly
And faylen after bitterly
Ah, that is a full noyous thyng
For many a louer in louyng
Hangeth vpon her, and trusteth fast
Whiche lese her trauayle at the last
Of thing to cõmen she wot nyght nought
Therfore if it be wysely sought
Her counsayle foly is to take
For many tymes, whan she wol make
A ful good silogisme, I drede
That afterwarde ther shal in dede
Folowe an euel conclusyon
That put me in confusyon
For many tymes I haue it seme
That many haue begyled beme
For trust that they haue set in hope
Whiche fel hem afterwarde a slope.

But natheles yet gladly she
That he ꝑ wol him vn her held
Had al tymes her purpose clere
Without deceyt any where
That she desyreth sykerly
When I her blamed I dyd foly
But what auayleth her good wyl
When she ne may shewe my stound yl
That helpeth lytel that she may do
Outrake behest vnto my wo
And beest certayne in no wyse
Without yfere is not to preyse.

When beest and bede asondre bary
They done a great contrary
This am I passed vp and downe
With dole, thought, and confusioune

Of

Of my diſeaſe there is no nombre
Daunger and ſhame me encombre
Drede alſo, and Jelouſye
And wicked tonge ful of enuye
Of whiche the charpe and cruel yre
Ful ofte me putte in great martyre
They haue my loye fully lette
Sithe Bialacoil they haue brchette
Fro me in priſon wickedly
Whom I loue ſo entierly
That it wol my bane be
But I the ſoner may hym ſe
And yet more ouer worſt of al
There is ſette to kepe, foule her befal
A rympled becke ferre romne in rage
Frowny ng and yelowe in her viſage
Whiche in a wayte lyeth day and nyght
That none of hem may haue a ſyght.

Now mote my ſorow enforced be
Ful ſoth it is ꝑ Loue vaſe me
Thre wōder yeftes of his grace
Which I haue lorne now in this place
Sithe they ne may without drede
Helpen but lytel who taketh hede
For here auayleth no ſwete thought
And ſwete ſpeche helpeth right nought
The thirde was called ſwete Lokynge
That nowe is lorne without leſynge.

Yeftes were fayre, but nat forthy
They helpe me but ſymply
But Bialacoil looſed be
To gone at large and to be fre
For hym my lyfe lyeth al in dout
But yf he come the rather out
Alas I trowe it wol nat bene
For howe ſhulde I ever mor hym ſene
He may nat out and that is wronge
Becauſe the tour is ſo ſtronge
How ſhulde he out, or by whoſe proweſſe
Of ſo ſtronge a forteresſe
By me certayne it nyl be do
God wotte I haue no wytte therto
But wel I wote I was in rage
Whan I to Loue dyd homage
Who was the cauſe (in ſothfaulneſſe)
But her ſelfe dame Idelneſſe
Which me conueyde through fair prayere
To enter in to that fayre bergere
She was to blame me to leue
The whiche nowe doth me ſore greue
A fooles worde is nought to trowe
Ne worthe an apple for to lowe
Men ſhulde hem ſaye bitterly
At prime temps of hys foly
I was a foole, and ſhe me leued
Through whom I am right nought releued
She accomplyſhed al my wyl
That nowe me greueth wonderyl.

Reaſon me ſayde what ſhuld fal
A foole my ſelfe I may wel cal
That loue a ſide I had not laid
And trowed ſ daime Reſō ſaid
Reſon had bothe ſkyll and ryght
Whā ſhe me blamed, wh al her myght
To medle of Loue, that hath me ſhent
But certayne nowe I wol repent

And ſhulde I repent, nay parde
A falſe traytour, thē ſhuld I be
The diuels engis wold me take
Yf I my loue wolde forſake
Or Bialacoil falſely betraye
Shulde I at miſcheſe hate hym naye
Sithe he nowe for hys curteſye
Is in priſon of Jelouſye
Curteſye certayne dyd he me
So muche, that it may not yolden be
Whan he the hay paſſen me lete
To kyſſe the Roſe, fayre and ſwete
Shulde I therfore conne hym maugre
Nay certayuly, it ſhal not be
For Loue ſhal neuer yeue good wyl
Here of me, through worde or wyl
Offence or complayne more or leſſe
Neither of hope nor Idelneſſe
For certes it were wronge that I
Hated hem for her curteſy
There is not elſe, but ſuffre and thynke
And waken whan I ſhulde wynke
Abyde in hope, til loue through chaunce
Sende me ſucour or allegeaunce
Expectant aye tyll I may mete
To getten mercy of that ſwete.

Whilom I thinke howe Loue to me
Sayde he would take at gre
My ſeruyce, if vnpacience
Cauſed me to done offence
He ſayde, in thanke I ſhal it take
And high maiſter eke the make
If wickednelſſe me reue it the
But ſone I trowe that ſhal nat be
Theſe were hys wordes by and by

Jt semed he loued me trewely
Nowe is there not but serue hym wele
Jf that J thynke hys thanke to fele
My good myn harme, lythe hole in me
In Loue may no defaute be
For trewe loue ne fayled neuer man
Sothely the faute mote nedes than
Is god forbyde, be founde in me
And howe it cometh, J can not se
Nowe let it gone as it may go
Whether Loue wol sucour me or so
He may do hole on me hys wyll
J am so sore bounde hym tyll
From hys seruyce J may not flene
For lyfe and dethe withouten wene
Is in hys hande, J may not chese
He may me do bothe wynne and lese
And sythe so sore he dothe me greue
Yet yf my lust he wolde acheue
To Bialacoil goodly to be
J yeue no force what fel on me
For though J dye, as J mote nede
J pray Loue of hys goodlyhede
To Bialacoil do gentylnesse
For whom J lyue in suche distresse
That J mote dyen for penaunce
But first, without repentaunce
J wol me confesse in good entent
And make in haste my testament
As leuers done that felen smerte
To Bialacoil leaue J myn herte
Whole, without departyng
Or doublenesse of repenteyng.

¶ Coment Raison vient a Lamant.

Thus as J made my passage
In compleynt, a in cruel rage
And J not wher to finde a leche
That couthe vnto min helpyng
Sodaynely agayne comen doun (eche
Out of her tour J sawe Reasoun
Discrete and wyse, and full plesaunt
And of her porte ful auenaunt
The right way she toke to me
Whiche stode in great perplexite
That was poshed in euery syde
That J nyst wher J myght abyde
Tyll she demurely sadde of chere
Sayd to me as she came nere
Myn owne frende, arte thou greued
Howe is this quarel yet atcheued
Of loues syde anone tel me
Hast thou not yet of Loue thy fyl-
Art thou nat wery of thy seruyce
That the hath in suche wyse
What ioy haste thou in thy louyng
Is it swete or bytter thyng
Canst thou yet chese, lette me se
What best thy sucour myght be.

Thou seruest a ful noble lorde
That maketh the thral for thy tewarde
Whiche aye renewyth thy tourment
With folye so he hath the blent
Thou fel in mischefe thylke daye
When thou diddest the sothe to saye
Obeysaunce and eke homage
Thou wroughtest nothyng as the sage
When thou became his liege man
Thou dyddest a great foly than
Thou wistest nat what fel thereto
With what lorde thou haddest to do
Yf thou haddest hym wel knowe
Thou haddest nought be brought so lowe
For yf thou wyst what it were
Thou noldest serue hym halfe a yere
Nat a weke, nor halfe a daye
Ne yet an houre without delaye
Ne neuer J loued paramours
Hys lordshyppe is so ful of shours
Knowest hym ought
Lamaunt. Ye dame parde
Raysoun. Nay nay. Lamaunt, yes J
Raysoun. Wherfore lette se
Lamaunt. Of that he sayde J shulde be
Gladde to haue suche lorde as (he)
And maister of suche seignorye
Raysoun, knowest hym no more
Lamaunt. Nay certes J
Saue that he yafe me rules there
And went his waye, J nyst where
And J abode bounde in balaunce
Lo, there a noble conysaunce

¶ Raysoun.

But J wolde that J knewe hi nowe
Gynning a ende, sithe that thou
Art so anguishous and mate
Disfygured out of astate
There may no wreche haue more of wo
Ne caytyfe none enduren so
It were to euery manne syttyng
Of hys lorde haue knowlegyng
For if thou knewe hym out of dout
Lyghtly thou shuldest scapen out
Of thy prison that marreth the

Lamaunt. And

Ye dame syth my lorde is he
And I hys manne made with myn honde
I wolde ryght fayne vnderstonde
To knowe of what kynde he be
If any wolde enforme me.

¶ Raysoun.

I Wolde (sayde Reason) the lere
Sith þ to lerne hast such dylire
And shewe the withouten fable
A thing that is not demóstrable
Thou shalt withouten science
And knowe withouten experyence
The thyng that may not knowen be
Ne wyste ne shewed in no degre
Thou mayst the sothe of it not witten
Though in the it were writtern
Thou shalt not knowe therof more
Whyle thou art ruled by hys lore
But vnto hym that loue wol flye
The knotte may vnclosed be
Which hath to the, as it is founde
So longe to knytte and not vnbounde
Nowe serte wel thyn entencyon
To here of loue discripcion.

LOue it is an hatefull pees
A free acquytaunce without reles
And thrauz þ fret ful of falshede
A sickernesse al set in drede
Inhert is a dispeyring hoope
And ful of hoope it is wanhoope
Wise woodnesse, and voyde Reason
A swete peryl in to drowne
An heuy burthen lyght to beare
A wicked wawe away to weare
It is Carybdes perylous
Disagreable and gracious
It is discordaunce that can acorde
And accordaunce to discorde
It is conuyng without science
Wisdome without sapience
Witte without discrecyon
Hauoyre without possessyon
It is lyke hele and hole sickenesse
A truste drowned and dronkenesse
And helthe ful of maladye
And charyte ful of envye
And angre ful of haboundaunce
And a gredy suffysaunce
Delyte ryght ful of heuynesse
And derryed ful of gladnesse
Bytter swetenesse and swete errour
Ryght yuel sauoured good sauour
Sen that pardone hath withinne
And pardone spotted without sinne
Ipayne also it is ioyous
And felowye ryght pyrous
Also playe that feide is stable
And stedfast right meuable
A strength weyked to stonde vpright
And febleneesse ful of myght
Witte vnauysed, sage foly
And ioy ful of turmentrye
A laughter it is wepyng aye
Rest that trauayleth nyght and daye
Also a swete hel it is
And a sorowful paradis
A pleasaunt gayle and easy prisoun
And ful of froste somer seasoun
Prime temps ful of frostes whyte
And May deuoyde of al delyte
With seet braunches blossoms vngrene
And ne we frute fylled with wynter tene
It is a lowe maye nat forbeare
Ragges rybaned with golde to weare
For al so wel wol loue be sette
Under ragges as ryche rochette
And eke as wel by amorettes
In mourning blacke, as bright burnettes
For none is of so mokel pryse
Ne no man founden so wyse
Ne none so hygh of parage
Ne no man founde of wytte so sage
No man so hardy ne so wight
Ne no man of so mokel myght
None so fulfylled of bounte
That he with loue may daunted be
Al the worlde holdeth this way
Loue maketh al to gone myswaye
But it be they of yuel lyfe
Whom Genius curseth manne and wyfe
That wrongly werke agayne nature
None suche I loue, ne haue no cure
Of suche as loues seruantes bene
And wol nat by my counsayle stene
For I ne preyse that louyng
Wherthrough man at the laste endyng
Shal cal hem wretches ful of wo
Loue greueth hem and shendeth so
But if thou wolte wel loue eschewe
For to escape out of hys mewe
And make al hole thy sorowe to slake
No better counsayle mayst thou take
Than thynke to fleen wel ywis
Way nought helpe els, for wit thou thys
If thou flye it, it shal flye the
Folowe it, and folowen shal it the.

Lamaunt

¶ Lamaunt.

Whan I had herde Reason sayne
Which had spitte her speche in vayne
Dame (saide I) I dare wel saye
Of this auaunt me wel I maye
That from your scholе so deuiaunt
I am, that neuer the moze auaunt
Right nouzt am I throughe your doctryne
I dulle vnder your disciplyne
I wot no moze than wyste euer
To me so contrary and so fer
Is euery thyng that ye me lere
And yet I can it al by parture
Myne herte forzeteth therof right nought
It is so wzitten in my thought
And depe grauen it is so tender
That al myne hert I can it render
And rede it ouer communely
But to my selfe leudest am I.

BVt sith ye loue disceyuen so
And lacke and preise it bothe two
Defyneth it in to this letter
That I may thynke on it the better
For I herde neuer diffined here
And wylfully I wolde it lere
If loue be serched wel and sought
It is a syckenes of the thought
Imeted and knedde betwyxt twayne
With male and female with o cheyne
Softely ꝑ byndeth, that they nyl twynne
Whether so therof they lese or wynne
The rote sprigeth throughe hote bzenning
In to disordynate desyzing
For to kyssen and embzace
And at her lust them to solace
Of other thing loue recheth nought
But setteth her hert and al her thought
More for delectacioun
Than any procreacioun
Of other fruite by engendzure
Which loue to god is nat pleasure
For of her body fruyte to gette
They yeue no force, they are so sette
Upon delyte to playe in fere
And some haue also this manere
To fayne hem for loue seke
Suche loue I preise not at a leke
For paramours they do but fayne
To loue trewly they disdayne
They kissen ladyes traytourly
And swerne hem othes vtterly
With many a leasyng, & many a fable
And al they fynden disceyuable
And whan they han her lust getten
The hoote ernes they al forzetten
Women the harme byen ful sore
But men this thynken euermore
That lasse harme is, so more I thee
Disceyue them, than disceyued be
And namely where they ne maye
Fynde none other meane waye
For I wot wel in sothfastnesse
That what dothe nowe his besynesse
With any woman for to dele
For any lust that he may fele
But if it be for engendzure
He doth trespasse I you ensure
For he shulde serten al his wyl
To getten a lykely thynge him tyl
And to sustayne, if he myght
And kepe forthe by kyndes right
His owne lykenesse and semblaunce
For bycause al is corzumpable
And fayle shulde successyoun
Ne were their generacioun
Our seedes sterne for to saue
Whan father or mother arne in graue
Her children shulde, whan they ben dede
Ful diligent bene in her stede
To vse that warke on suche a wyse
That one may throughe another ryse
Therfore set kynde therin delyte
For men therin shuld hem delyte
And of that dede be not erke
But ofte sythes haunt that werke
For none wolde drawe therof a draught
Ne were delyte, whiche hath hem caught
This had slubyl dame Nature
For none gothe right I the ensure
Ne hath entent boole ne partyte
For her desyre is for delyte
The whiche fostered creasse, and eke
The playe of loue, for ofte seke
And thrall hem selfe they be so myzt
Unto the pzyncе of euery vyce
For of eche synne it is the rote
Unlefful lust, though it be sote
And of al yuel the racyne
As Tullyus can determyne
Which in his tyme was ful sage
In a boke he made of age
Where that more he prayseth elde
Though he be croked and vnwelde
And moze of commendacyoun
Than youth in his discripcioun

For youthe set both man and wike
In al parel of soule and lyke
And parel is, but men haue grace
The parel of youthe for to pace
Without any deth or distresse
It is so ful of wyldnesse
So ofte it dothe shame and domage
To him or to his lynage
It ledeth man, now vp now down
In mokel dissolucioun
And maketh him loue yuel company
And lede his lyfe distrulyly
And halte him payde with none estate
Within him selfe is suche debate
He chaungeth purpose and entent
And yalte in to some couent
To lyuen after her empryse
And leseth fredome and fraunchyse
That nature in him had sette
The which agayne he may not gette
Yf he there make his mansyon
For to abyde profession
Though for a tyme his hert absente
It may not fayle, he shal repente
And eke abyde thylke day
To leaue his abyte, and gon his way
And leseth his worshyp and his name
And dare not come agayne for shame
But al his lyfe he doth so mourne
Because he dare not home retourne
Fredome of kynde so lost hath he
That neuer may recured be
But that if God him graunte grace
That he may, er he hence pace
Conteyne vnder obedyence
Through the vertue of pacience
For youth set man in al folye
In vnthrifte and in ribaudye
In lechery, and in outrage
So ofte it chaungeth of corage
Youth gynneth ofte such bargayne
That may not ende without payne
In great parel is set youth hede
Delyte so doth his bridel lede
Delyte this hangeth, drede the nought
Both mans body and his thought
Onely through youthes chambere
That to done yuel is customere
And of naught elis taketh hede
But onely folkes for to lede
Into disporte and wildenesse
So is froward from sadnesse
But elde draweth hem therfro
Who wote it not, he may wel go
And me of hem, that nowe arne olde
That whilom youth had in holde
Whiche yet remembreth of tender age
How it him brought in many a rage
And many a foly therin wrought
But now ỳ elde hath him through sought
They repent hem of her folye
That youthe hem put in ieopardye
In parel and in moche wo
And made hem ofte amysse to do
And sewen yuell companye
Ryot and aduoutrye.

But elde gan agayne restrayne
From suche foly, and refrayne
And set men by her ordynaunce
In good rule and gouernaunce
But yuel she spendeth her seruise
For no man wol her loue, neyther preyse
She is hated, this wote I wele
Her acqueyntaunce wonlde no man fele
Ne han of elde companye
Men hate to be of her alye
For no man wolde becomen olde
Ne dye, whan he is yonge and bolde
And elde metuayleth right greatly
Whan they remembre hem inwardly
Of many a perillous empryse
Which that they wrought in sondry wyse
Howe euer they myghe without blame
Escape awaye without shame
In youth without domage
Or repriefe of her lynage
Losse of membre, shedyng of blood
Parel of dethe, or losse of good
Wost thou nat where youthe abyt
That men so preysen in her wyte
With Delyte the halte colour
For both they dwellen in o toure
As long as youthe is in season
They dwellen in one mansyon
Delyte of youthe wol haue seruice
To do what so he wol deuyse
And youthe is redy euermore
For to obey for smerte of sore
Vnto Delyte, and him to yeue
Her seruyce, whyle that she may lyue.

Where elde abyte, I wol the tel
Shortly, and no while dwel
For thyder behoueth the to go
Yf dethe in youth the not slo

Or

Of this iourney thou mayste not fayle
With her labour and trauayle
Lodged ben with sorowe and wo
That neuer out of her courte go
Payne and dystresse, sykenesse, and yre
And melancoly that angry syre
Ben of her paleys senatours
Groning & grutching, her herbegeours
The day and nyghte her to tourment
With cruel deth they her present
And tellen her crlyche and late
That deth stondeth armed at her gate
Than bryngе they to her remembraunce
The foly dedes of her enfaunce
Whiche causen her to mourne in wo
That youth hath her begyled so
Whiche so dainly away is hasted
She wyped the time that she hath wasted
Complayning of the preterytte
And the present, that nat abyttе
And of her olde vanyte
That but afore her she maye se
In the future some socoure
To leggen her of her doloure
To graunt her tyme of repentaunce
For her synnes to do penaunce
And at the last so her gouerne
To wynne the ioye that is eternе
Fro which go backwarde your he made
In vanyte to drowne and wade
For present tyme abydeth nought
It is more swyfte than any thought
So lytel while it doth endure
That there nys compte ne measure
But how that euer the game go
Who lyst to loue ioye and myrthe also
Of loue, be it he or she
Hye or lowe who it be
In frute they shulde hem delyte
Her parte they may not els quite
To saue hem selfe in honeste
And yet ful many one I se
Of women, sothly for to sayne
That desyre, and wolde fayne
The playe of Loue, they be so wylde
And not coueyte to go with childe
And yf with childe they be perchaunce
They wol it holde a great mischaunce
But what so euer wo they fele
They wol not playne, but counсele
But if it be any foole or nyce
In whome that shame hath no iustyce
For to Delyte echone they drawe
That haunt this worke both hye & lawe
Saue suche ỳ arne worth right nought
That for money wol be bought
Suche loue I preyse in no wyse
Whan it is gyuen for couetyse
I preyse no woman, though so be woode
That yeueth her selfe for any goode
For lytel shuld a man telle
Of her, that wyl her body selle
Be she mayde, be she wyfe
That quicke wol selle her by her lyfe
Howe fayre there that euer she make
Her is a wicche I undertake
That loued suche one, for swete or soure
Though she him called her paramoure
And laugheth on him, & maketh him feste
For certaynly no suche beste
To be loued is nat worthy
Or beare the name of Diury
Alone shulde her please, but he wer woode
That wol dispoyle him of his goode
Yet natheless I wol not save
That she for solace and for playe
Saye a iewel or other thynge
Take of her loues free yeuynge
But that she aske it in no wyse
For drede of shame, or couetyse
And she of hers maye him certayne
Without sclaunder yeuen agayne
And ioyne her hertes togyder so
In loue, and take and yeue also
Trowe nat that I wol hem twynne
Whan wher loue there is no synne
I wol that they togyder go
And done al that they han ado
As curtes shulde and debonayre
And in her loue beren hem fayre
Without vice, both he and she
So that alwaye in honeste
Fro folly loue to kepe hem clere
That bryngeth hertes with his fere
And that her loue in any wyse
Be deuoyde of couetyse
Good loue shuld engendred be
Of trewe hert, iuste, and secrete
And not of suche as set her thought
To haue her lust, and els nought
So are they caught in loues lace
Trewly for bodily solace
Flesshely delyte is so present
With the, that set al thyne entent
Without more, what shulde I glose
For to get and haue the Rose

Which maketh the so mate and wood
That thou desyrest none other good
But thou art not an yuche the nerre
But euer abydest in sorow and werre
As in thy face it is sene
It maketh the bothe pale and lene
Thy might, thy vertue gothe away
A sory gest in good fay.
Thou herborest in thyne inne
The god of Loue whan thou let inne
Wherfore I rede thou therre him oute
Or he shal greue the out of doute
For to thy profyte it wol turne
If he no more with the sojourne
In great mischefe and sorow sonken
Ben herres, that of loue arne dronken
As thou peraunture knowen shall
Whan thou hast lost the tyme all
And spent thy thought in ydelnesse
In waste, and wofull lustynesse
Yf thou mayst lyue the tyme to se
Of loue for to delyuered be
Thy tyme thou shalt bewepe sore
The which neuer thou mayst restore
For tyme lost, as men may se
For nothynge may recouered be
And if thou scape, yet at laste
Fro loue that hath the so faste
Knytte and bounden in his lace
Certayne I holde it but a grace
For many one as it is seyne
Haue lost, and spent also in veyne
In his seruice without socour
Body and soule, good, and treasour
Wytte, and strength, and eke rychesse
Of whiche they hab neuer redresse.

¶ Lamant.

Thus taught & preched hath Reson
But Loue spyte her sermon
That was so imped in my thought
That her doctrine I set at nought
And yet ne sayde she neuer a dele
That I ne vnderstode it wele
Worde by worde the matter all
But vnto Loue I was so thrall
Whiche calleth ouer al his praye
He chaseth so my thought aye
And holdeth myne herte vnder his sele
As trusty and trewe as any stele
So that no deuocion
Ne had I in the sermon
Of dame Reson, ne of her rede
It toke no soiour in myne heede
For all yede out at one ere
That in that other she did lere
Fully on me she lost her loze
Her speche me greued wonder sore.

That vnto her for ire I saide
For anger, as I dyd abrayde
Dame, and is it your wyll algate
That I not loue, but that I hate
All men, as ye me teche
For if I do after your speche
Sithe that you seyne Loue is not good
Than must I nedes say with mode
Yf I it leue, in hatred aye
Lyuen, and voyde loue awaye
From me a synful wrethe
Hated of al that tethe
I may not go none other gate
For eyther must I loue or hate
And if I hate men of newe
More than loue, it wol me rewe
As by your prechyng semeth me
For Loue nothyng ne prayseth the
Ye yeue good counsayle sykerly
That precheth me al day, that I
Shulde not loues lore alowe
He were a foole woide you not trowe
In speche also ye han me taught
Another loue that knowen is naught
Which I haue herde you not reprieue
To loue eche other by your leue
If ye wold diffine it me
I wolde gladly here to se
At the leest if I may lere
Of sondry loues the manere.

¶ Raison.

Certes frende, a foole art thou
Whan that thou nothyng wolt alow
That I for thy profyte saye
Yet wol I saye the more in faye
For I am redy at the leest
To accomplysshe thy request
But I not where it wol aueyle
In vayne peraunture I shall trauayle
Loue there is in sondrye wyse
As I shall the here deuyse
For some loue leful is and goode
I meane not that which maketh ỹ woode

And

And bringeth the in many a fytte
And rauyssheth fro the al thy wytte
It is so marueylous and queynt
Wyth suche loue be no moze aqueynt.

¶ Cõment Raison diffinit Iunsete.

IOue of frendshippe also there is
Whiche maketh no man don amis
Of wyl knitte betwixte two
That wol not breke for wele ne wo
Whiche long is lykely to continue
Whan wyl and goodes ben in cõmune
Grounded by goddes ordynaunce
Hoole without discordaunce
Wyth hem holdynge conmaunce
Of al her good in charyte
That there be none exceptioun
Through chaungyng of entencioun
That eche helpe other at her nede
And wisely hele both worde and dede
Trewe of meanyng, deuoyde of slouthe
For wyt is nought without trouthe
So that the tone dare al his thought
Sayne to his frende, and spare nought
As to him selfe without dredyng
To be discouered by wreying
For glad is that communicioun
Whan there is none suspeccioun
Whome they wouldе proue
That trewe and perfyte weren in loue
For no man may be amyable
But if he be so ferme and stable
That fortune chaunge him not ne blynde
But that his frende alway him fynde
Bothe pore and riche in o state
For if his frende through any gate
Wol complayne of his powerte
He shulde not byde so longe, tyl he
Of his helpynge him requyre
For good dede done throughe prayere
Is solde and bought to dere ywis
To hem that of great valure is
For hem fulfylled of gentylnesse
Can ruell demeane his distresse
And man that worthy is of name
To askenne often hath great shame
A good man bremeth in his thought
For shame whan he asketh ought
He hath great thought, and bredeth aye
For his disease whan he shal praye
His frende, lest that he warned be
Tyl that he preue his stabilite
But whan that he hath fonnden one
That trusty is and trewe as stone
And assayed him at al
And founde him stedfast as a wal
And of his frendshyppe be certayne
He shal him shewe, both loue and payne
And al that dare thynke or saye
Without shame, as he wel maye
For how shuld he ashamed be
Of suche one as I tolde the
For whan he wot his secret thought
The thirde shal know therof right nought
For two in nombre ben bet than thre
In euery counsayle and secret
Repreue he dredeth neuer a dele
Who that beleue his wordes wele
For euery wise man out of drede
Can kepe his tong tyl he se nede
And fooles can not holde her tonge
A fooles belle is soone ronge
Yet shal a trewe frende do more
To helpe his felowe of his sore
And socour him whan he hath nede
In all that he may done in dede
And gladder that he him pleaseth
Than his felowe that he easeth
And if he do nat his request
He shal as muche him moleste
As his felowe, for that he
Nave not fulfyl his volunte
Fully, as he hath required
If bothe the hertes loue hath fyred
Loue and wo they shal departe
And take euenly eche his parte
Half his anoye he shal haue aye
And comforte what that he maye
And of this diuise parte shal be
If Loue wol departed be.

AND whilom of this matire
Spake Tullius in a tyre
And shulde maken his request
Vnto his frende, that is honest
And he goodly shulde it fulfyll
But if the more were out of skyll
And otherwyse not graunt therto
Except only in causes two
Yf men his frende to dethe woldе dryue
Let him be besy to saue his lyue
Also if men wolden him assayle
Of his worthyp to make him fayle
And hyndren him of his renoun

Let him with ful entencyon
His dewer done in eche degre
That his frende ne chamed be
In this two case with his might
Takyng no kepe to skyll nor right
As ferre as Loue may him excuse
This ought no man to refuse
This Loue that I haue tolde to the
Is nothyng contrarye to me
This wol I that thou folowe wele
And leue the tother euery dele
This Loue to vertue al entendeth
The tother fooles dient and shendeth

Another Loue also there is
That is contrary vnto this
Whiche desyre is so constrayned
That is but wyl fayned
Away fro trouthe it doth so varye
That to good loue it is contrarye
For it maymeth in many wyse
Syke herres with couetyse
All in wynnyng and in profyte
Suche loue setteth his delyte
This loue so hangeth in balaunce
That if it lese his hope parchaunce
Of lucre, that he is set vpon
It wol fayle, and quenche anon
For no man may be amorous
Ne in his lyuing vertuous
But he loue more in moode
Wen for him selfe, than for her goode
For loue that profyte doth abyde
Is false, and byddeth not in no tyde
Loue cometh of dame Fortune
That lyteł whyle woll contune
For it shal chaungen wonders soone
And take eclyps as the moone
Whan he is from vs let
Through erth, that betwyxt is set
The sonne and her, as it may fall
Be it in partie, or in all
The shadowe maketh her bemes merke
And her hornes to shewe derke
That part, where she hath lost her lyght
Of Phebus fully, and the syght
Tyll whan the shadowe is ouerpaste
She is enlumyned ageyn as faste
Through the brightnes of ỳ sonne bemes
That reuerth to her agayne her lemeg
That loue is right of such nature
Now is fayre, and nowe obscure
Nowe bright, nowe clypsy of manere
And whilom dymme, & whilom clere
As soone as pouerte gynneth take
With mantel and werdes blake
Hyderth of loue the lyght away
That into nyght it tourneth day
It may not se richesse shyne
Tyll the blacke shadowes fyne
For whan richesse shyneth bryght
Loue recouereth ayen his lyght
And whan it fayleth, he wol flyt
And as she greueth, so greueth it
Of this loue here what I saye
The riche men are loued aye
And namely tho that sparande bene
That wol not washe her herres clene
Of the fylth, nor of the vyce
Of gredy bysmyng auarice
The riche man ful londe is ywis
That weneth that he loued is
If that his herr it vnderstode
It is not he, it is his goode
He may wel weten in his thoug't
His good is loued, and he right noug't
For if he be a nygarde eke
Wen wol not set by him a leke
But haten him, this is the sothe
Lo what profyte his catel dothe
Of euery man that may him se
It getteth him nought but enmyte
But he amende him selfe of that vice
And know him selfe, he is not wise
Certes he shulde aye frendly be
To get him loue also ben fre
Or els he is not wise ne sage
No more than is a gote ramage
That he not loueth, his dede prouyth
Whan he his richesse so wel loueth
That he wol hyde it aye and spare
His poze frendes sene forfare
To kepen aye his purpose
Tyl for drede his eyen close
And tyl a wycked deth him take
Hym had leuer a sondre shake
And let al his lymmes a sondre ryue
Than leaue his richesse in his lyue
He thynketh to part it with no man
Certayne no loue is in him than
Howe shuld loue within him be
Whan in his herr is no pyte
That he trespaseth wel I wate
For eche man knoweth his estate
For wel him ought to be reproued
That loueth nought, ne is not loued

But

But sythe we arne to fortune comen
And hath our sermon of her nomen
I wonder wyl I tel the nowe
Thoutherdell neuer suche one I trowe
I not where thou me leuen shall
Though sothfastnesse it be all
As it is written, and is sothe
That vnto men more profyte dothe
The frowarde fortune and contrarie
Than the swote and debonaire
And yf the thynke it is doutable
It is through argument prouable
For the debonayre and softe
Falseth and begyleth ofte
For lyche a mother she can cherysshe
And mylken as dothe a norryce
And of her good to hym deles
And yeueth him parte of her iowels
With great ryches and dignite
And hem she hoteth stabylite
In state that is not stable
But chaungyng aye and variable
And febeth hym with glory veyne
And worldely blysse none certeyne
When she hym setteth on her whele
Than wene they to be ryght wele
And in so stable state withal
That neuer they wene for to fal
And whan they sette so hygh to be
They wene to haue in certaynte
Of herely frendes to great nombre
That nothyng myght her state encombre
They truste hem so on euery syde
Wenyng with hym they wolde abyde
In euery paryl and mischaunce
Without chaunce or daryaunce
Both of catel and of good
And also for to spende her blood
And al her membres for to spyll
Onely to fulfyll her wyll
They maken it hole in many wyse
And horten hem her ful seruyce
Howe sore that it do hem smerte
Into her very naked sherte
Herte and al so hole they yeue
For the tyme that they may lyue
So that with her flaterie
They maken fooles glorifye
Of her wordes spekyng
And han chere of a reioysyng
And trowe hem as the Euangyle
And it is al falshede and gyle
As they shal afterwarde se.

When they arne fal in pouerte
And ben of good and catel bare
Than shulde they sene who frendes ware
For of an hundred certaynly
Nor of a thousande ful scarsly
Ne shal they fynde vnnethes one
When pouerte is comen vpon
For thus Fortune that I of tell
With men whan her lyste to dwell
Maketh hem to lese her conysaunce
And norysheth hem in ignoraunce

But frowarde Fortune and peruerse
When hygh estates she doth reuerse
And maketh hem to tumble doune
Of her whele with sodayne rourne
And from her ryches dothe hem flye
And plongeth hem in pouerte
As a stepmother enuyous
And layeth a playster dolorous
Vnto her hertes wounded egre
Which is not temperd with vinegre
But with pouerte and indigence
For to shewe by experience
That she is Fortune verely
In whom no man shulde affye
Nor in her yeftes haue fyaunce
Sythe is so ful of daryaunce
Thus can she maken bye and lothe
When they from ryches arne throwe
Fully to knowen without were
Frende of affecte, and frende of chere
And whiche in loue weren trewe & stable
And whiche also weren daryable
After Fortune her goddesse
In pouerte, either in rychesse
For al that yeueth here out of drede
Vnhappe beareth it in dede
For in Fortune lette not one
Of frendes, whan fortune is gone
I meane tho frendes that wolde
Inone as entreth pouerte
And yet they wol not leaue hem so
But in eche place where they go
They call hem wretche, scorne, & blame
And of her mishappe hem diffame
And namely suche as in rychesse
Pretendeth moste of stabylnesse
Whan that they sawe hym set on lofte
And weren of hem socoured ofte
And moste yholpe in all her nede
But nowe they take no maner hede
But seyne in voyce of flaterye

That nowe appereth her folye
Ouer al wher so they fare
And synge, go farewel felde fare
Al suche frendes I beschrewe
For of trewe there be to fewe
But sothfast frendes, what so betyde
In eurry fortune wollen abyde
They han her hertes in suche nobleſſe
That they nyl loue for no rycheſſe
Nor for that fortune may hem sende
They wollen hem socour and defende
And chaunge for sorte ne for sore
For who hys frende loueth euermore
Though men drawe forth his to slo
He may not bewe her loue a two
But in case that I shal say
For pryde and recheſſe it be may
And for reproue by wreche
And discouerynge of priuite
With tonge wourdyng, as felon
Through venemous detraccion
Frende in this case wol gon hys way
For nothyng greue hym more ne may
And for nought els wol he ſle
If that he loue in stabylyte
And certayne he is well begone
Amonge a thousande that fynden one
For there may be no rycheſſe
Ayenſt frendschyp of worthynesſe
For it ne may so high arrayne
As may the valoure, sothe to sayne
Of hym that loueth trewe and well
Frendschyp is more than is catell
For frende in eourte aye better is
Than peny in purſe certis
And fortune mishapyng
Whan vpon men she is fallyng
Through misturnyng of her chaunce
And cast hem out of balaunce
She maketh through her aduerſite
Men ful clerely for to ſe
Hym that is frende in exiſtence
From hym that is by apparence
For in fortune maketh anone
To knowe thy frendes fro thy fone
By experience right as it is
The whiche is more to prayſe ywis
Than in muche rycheſſe and treſour
For more depe profyte and valour
Pouerte, and suche aduerſyte
Before, than dothe proſperite
For that one yeueth conyſaunce
And the tother ignorance.

And thus in pouerte is in dede
Trouthe declared fro falshede
For sayntfrendes it wol declare
And trewe also, what way they fare
For whan he was in hys rycheſſe
These frendes ful of doubleneſſe
Offred hym in many wyſe
Herte and body, and ſeruyce
what wold he the haue you to haue bought
To knowen openly her thought
That he nowe hath so clerely ſene
The laſſe begyled he shulde haue bene
And he had than perceyued it
But Rycheſſe nolde not let hym wyt
Wel more auauntage dothe him than
Sithe that it maketh hym a wyſe man
The great miſchefe that he perceyueth
Than dothe Rycheſſe that him deceyueth
Rycheſſe ryche ne maketh nought
Hym that on treaſour ſette his thought
For rycheſſe nomore in ſuffyſaunce
And nothyng in habundaunce
For ſuffyſaunce al onely
Maketh menne to lyue rychely.

For he that hath myrches tweyne
Ne value in hys demeyne
Lyueth more at eaſe, & more is riche
Than dothe he that is chiche
And in his barne hath soth to sayne
An hundred mauis of whete grayne
Though he be chapman or marchaunt
And haue of golde many beſaunt
For in the getteyng he hath ſuche wo
And in the keping drede also
And ſette euer more his beſyneſſe
For to encreaſe, and nat to leſſe
For to augment and multiplye
And though on heapes that lye him by
Yet neuer shal make his rycheſſe
Aſſeth vnto hys gredyneſſe
But the poore that reccheth nought
Saue of hys lyuelode in his thought
Whiche that he getteth with hys trauayle
He dredeth nought that it shal feyle
Though he haue lytel worldes goode
Meate and drynke and eaſy foode
Vpon hys trauayle and lyuyng
And also ſuffyſaunt clothyng
Or if in ſickenes that he fal
And lothe meate and drynke withal
Though he haue not his meate to bye
He shal bethynke hym haſtelye

To

To put hym out of al daungere
That he of meate hath no myſtere
Or that he may with lytel eke
Be founden, whyle that he is ſeke
Or that men ſhul hym berne in haſte
To lyue tyll hys ſickeneſſe be paſte
To ſome Mayſondewe beſyde
He caſte nought what ſhal hym betyde
He thynketh nought that euer he ſhall
Into any ſyckeneſſe fall.

AND though it fal, as it may be
That al be tyme ſpare ſhal he
As moche as ſhal to him ſuffyce
Whyle he is ſicke in any wyſe
He doth for that he wol be
Content with hys pouerte
Without nede of any manne
So muche in lytel haue he canne
He is a payde with hys fortune
And for he wyl be importune
Unto no wyght, ne onerous
Nor of her goodeſſe coueitous
Therfore he ſpareth, it may wel betne
Hys poore eſtate for to ſuſtene.

(ſpare
OR if him luſte not for to (ware
But ſuffreth forth, as nat ye
At laſt it happeneth, as it may
Right vnto hys laſte day
And take the worlde as it wolde be
For euer in herte thynketh he
The ſoner that dethe hym ſlo
To paradyſe the ſooner go
He hal, there for to lyue in blyſſe
Where that he hal no good myſſe
Thyder he hopeth god hal hym ſende
After thys wretched lyues ende
Pythagoras hym ſelfe reherſes
In a boke that the golde verſes
Is cleped, for the nobilyte
Of the honorable dyte
Than whan thou goeſt thy body fro
Fre in the heyre thou ſhalt vp go
And leauen al humanyte
And purely lyue in diete
He is a foole withouten were
That trowyth haue hys countrey here
In erthe is not our countre
That may theſe clerkes ſeyne and ſe
In ſoote of conſolacion
Where it is maked mencyon
Of our contre playne at the eye
By teachynge of philoſophye
Where leude men myght lere wit
Who ſo that wolde translaten it
If he be ſuche that can wel lyue
After hys rent, may hym yeue
And not deſyreth more to haue
Than may fro pouerte hym ſaue
A wyſe man ſayde, as we may ſene
Is no man wretched, but he it wene
Be he kynge, knyght, or tyrande
And many a tyraud is merry and baude
That ſwinketh, & bereth bothe day & nyght
Many a burthen of great myght
The whiche dothe hym laſſe offence
For he ſuffereth in patience
Ther laugh & daunce, tryppe and ſynge
And lay nought vp for her comyng
Put in the tauerne al diſpendeth
The wynnyng that god hem ſendeth
Than goeth he fardels for to bere
With as good chere as he dyd dere
To ſwinke & trauayle he not farneth
For to robben he diſdayneth
But right anon, after hys ſwynke
He gothe to tauerne for to drynke
Al theſe are ryche in habounddance
That can thus haue ſuffyſaunce
Wel more than can an vſurere
As god wel knoweth, without were
For an vſurer, ſo god me ſe
Shal neuer for ryche ſelfe ryche be
But euer more poore and indigent
Scarce and gredy in hys entent.

For ſothe it is, whom it diſpleaſe
There may no marchaunt lyue at eaſe
Hys herte in ſuche a where is ſette
That it quicke brenneth to gette
He neuer ſhal, though he hath geten
Thoughe he haue golde in garners yeten
For to be redy he dredeth ſore
Wherfore to getten more and more
He ſet hys herte and hys deſyre
So hote he brenneth in the fyre
Of coueityſe that maketh hym wood
To purchace other mennes good
He vnderfongeth a great payne
That vnderſtaketh to drynke vp Sayne
For the more he drynketh aye
The more he leaueth, the ſothe to ſaye
Thus is thruſt of falſe getyng
That laſte euer in coueityng
And the anguyſhe and diſtreſſe

With

With the fyre of gredyneſſe
She fyghteth with hym aye, and ſtriueth
That his herte a ſonder ryueth
Suche gredyneſſe hym aſſayleth
That whā he moſt hath, moſte he fayleth
Phiſiciens, and aduocates
Gone ryght by the ſame yates
They ſel her ſcience for wynnyng
And haunte her craft for great getting
Her wynnyng is of ſuche ſweteneſſe
That if a man fal in ſickeneſſe
They are ful glad, for her encreſſe
For by her wyl, without leſe
Euerych man ſhulde be ſeke
And though they dye, they ſet nat a leke
After when they the golde haue take
Ful lyttel care for hem they make
They wold that fourty were ſicke at ones
Yet two hundred, in fleſhe and bones
And yet two thouſande, as I geſſe
For to encreſſe her rycheſſe
They wol not worchen in no wyſe
But for lucre and couetyſe
For phiſicke gyueth firſt by ypot)
The phiſicien alſo ſotherly
And ſyrſen it goth to fyrſt hym fyre
To truſſe on hem it is folye
For they wil in no maner gre
Do ought nought for charyte
Ne in the ſame ſcrite are ſette
All the that pardon for to gette
Wurſhyps, honour, and rycheſſe
Her herres arne in great beſtreſſe
That folke lyue not holyly
But abourn al ſpecially
Suche as parſon beynglorye
And towarde god haue no memoyre
But ſoothe as ypocrites trace
And to her ſoules bothe purchace
And outwarde the wyng holyneſſe
Though they be ful of curſednеſſe
For ſyche to the apoſtels ſemblaunt
They beeryue other and hem ſelue
Begyled is the gyler than
For preachyng of a curſed man
Though to other may profyte
Himſelfe it auayleth not a myte
For ofte good predicacioun
Cometh of euyl entencyoun
To hym nat bayleth his prechyng
Al helpe he other with his teachyng
For where they good example take
There is he with beyngloryе ſhake

But let vs leuen theſe prechours
And ſpeke of hem that in her tours
Heape vp her golde, and faſt therte
And fore theron her herte ſette
They neither loue god ne drede
They kepe more than it is nede
And in her bagges fore it bynde
Out of the ſonne, and of the wynde
They put vp more than nede ware
And than they ſene poore folke forfare
For hunger dye, and for colde quake
God can wel vengeaunce therof take
The great miſchiefe hem aſſayleth
And thus in gadryng aye trauayleth
With muche payne they wynne richeſſe
And drede hem holdeth in diſtreſſe
To kepe that they garber faſt
With ſorowe they leaue it at the laſt
With ſorowe they forthe dye and fare
That hate ryches her heires yeue
And in defaut of loue it is
As it the werth ful wel yuels
For yf their grete, the forbe to ſame
I ouen hem, and were loued againe
And good loue reigned ouer al
Ryche wicke deſire ne ſhulde fal
But he ſhulde yeue, that moſt good had
To hem that were in nede beſtad
And lyue without falſe diſſire
For charyte, ful clene and pure
If they hem yeue to goodneſſe
Enſorchyng hem from ydelneſſe
In al thys worlde than pore none
Ne ſhulde fynde I trowe not one
But charmed is thys worlde vnſtable
For lone is ouer al vnſtable
Ne ſe that no man loueth no lawe
But for wynning and for profyte
And loue is thralled in ſeruage
And than it is ſelde for auauntage
Yet women wol her bodyes ſel
Suche ſoules goth to the deuyl of hel.

When I oue had tolde hem hys entent
The baronage to counſayle went
In maner ſenatours they ſyt
And diuerſly they ſayde her wyt
But after diſcorde they accorded
And her accorde to I oue recorded
But ſayden they, we ben at one
Thy reden accorde of euerychone
But take it ycheſſe al onely
That I owgne hath ful hautenly

That

That she the castel myl not assayle
Ne smite a stroke in thys batayle
With darte ne mace, speare, ne knyfe
For man that speketh, or bereth the lyfe
And blameth your empryse ywis
And from our hoste departed is
At leest way, as in this pyte
So hath she this man in dispyte
For she sayth he ne loued her neuer
And therfore she wol hate hym euer
For he wol gather no tresore
He hath her wrathe for euermore
He agrite her neuer in other caas
Lohte al holly hys trespas
She sayth wel, that this other day
He asked her leaue to gone the way
That is cleped to muche yeuyng
And spake ful fayre in hys prayeng
But whan he prayed her, poore was he
Therfore she warned hym the entre
Sey yet is he not thrusch so
That he hath gotten a pfyr or two
That quitely is hys owne in holde
Thus hath Rychesse us al tolde
And whan Rychesse ha this recorded
Enhoncen her we ben accorded.

And we fynde in our accordaunce
That fatle Semblant and Idlenaunce
With al the folke of her barayle
Shul at the bridge gate assayle
That wicked rouge hath in keping
With hys Normans ful of langlyng
And with hem Curtesye and Largesse
That shul hem be her hardynesse
To cherche wyfe that kepeth so harde
Fayre welcomyng within her warde
Than shal Delyte and wel beseyng
For he, Shame aboue to seyng
With al her hoste early and late
They shul assayten thilke gate
Ageyns hem he shal hardynesse
Assayle, and also Rychesse
With al the folke of her ordeyning
That neuer wyste what was feyning.

Jelousye shall fyght and eke pryue
With Daunger full of cruelte
Thus is your hoste ordayned wele
Doune shal the Castel euery dele
If euerythe do hys entent
So that Reuns be present
Your mother ful of wrathfulnesse
That can ynough of suche vsage
Without her may no wight spede
This werke, neither for worde ne dede
Therfore is good ye for her sende
For through her may this worke amende

Jolyfe my mother the goddes
That is my lady, and my maistres
Nis nat al at my wylyng
Ne doth nat al my besynesse.
Yet can she sometyme done labour
When that her lyste in my socour
As my nede is for to atcheue
But nowe I thynke her nat to greue
My mother is she, and of childehede
I bothe worshyp her, and eke drede
For who that dredeth sire ne dame
Shal it abye in body or name
And natheles, yet conne we
Sende after her if nede be
And were she nygh she comen wolde
I trowe that nothyng might her holde

My mother is of great prowesse
She hath tane many a fortresse
That coll hath many a poundeer thys
There I nas not present ywis
And yet when say de it was my dede
But I come neuer in that stede
For me ne lyketh so moche I the
That suche rouns ben take with me
For why? Be thynketh that in no wyse
It may be cleped but marchaundyse.

Go bye a courser blacke or white
And pay therfore, ther art thou quite
The marchaunt ouerth the right nought
Ne thou hym whan thou it bought
I wol not sellyng clepe yeuing
For sellyng asketh no guerdonyng
Here lyke no thanke, ne no merite
That one goth from that other al quite
But thys sellyng is not semblable
For whan his horse is in the stable
He may it selle agayne parde
And wynnen on it, suche happe may be
Al may the manne nat leese ywis
For at the leest the skynne is his
Or els, if it so betyde
That he wol kepe his horse to ryde
Yet is he lorde ave of hys horse
But thylke chaffare is wel worse

There

There Venus entermeteth ought
For who so suche chaffare hath bought
He shal not westhem so wysely
That he ne shal lese al utterly
Both hys money, and hys chaffare
But the seller of the warre
The pilte and profyte have shal
Certayne the byer shal lese al
For be ne canne so dere it bye
To have lordshyp, and ful maistrye
Ne have power to make lettyng
Neither for yefte ne for preachyng
That of his chaffare maugre his
Another shal have as muche ywis
If he wol yeve as muche as he
Of what countrey so that he be
Or for right nought so happe may
If he canne flatter her to her pay
Leme than suche marchaunters wilde
Non, but fooles in every wyse
Whan they bye suche thyng wylfully
There as they lese her good folyly
But marbrielle, thys dare I say
That mother is not wonte to pay
For she is neither so foole ne nyce
To entermete her of suche byce
But trust wel, he shal pay al
That repente of hys bargayne shal
Whan povertie put hym in distresse
Al were he scoler to Kychesse
That is for me in great penaunce
Whan he allmerth to my wyllyng.

But my mother sayne Venus
And by her father Saturnus
That her engendred by hys lyste
But nat upon his webbed wyfe
Yet wol I more bere on swerre
To make this rhyme the surere
Nowe by that fayth, and that beaute
That I owe to al my brethren free
Of whiche there nys wyght under heven
That canne her fathers names nevyn
So bruers and so many there be
That with my mother have be pryve
Yet wol I swere for sicherneste
The pyle of helle to my witnesse
Nowe drynke I not thys yere clarre
If that I lye, or forswore be
For of the goddes the vlage is
That who so hym forswereth amis
Shal that yere drynke no clarre
Nowe have I swore ynough parde
If I forswere me than am I lorne
But I wol never be forswore
Sithe Kychesse hath me sayled here
Be shal abye that trespas ful dere
At leest way but her harme
With swerde, or sparth, or gysarme
For certes syrthe she loveth not me
Fro thylke tyme that she may se
The castel and the tour to shake
In sorye tyme she shal awake
If I may gryppe a tyche manne
I shal so pulle hym, if I canne
That he shal in a ferne flounders
Lese al his mathes, and his poundes
I shal hym make his pens out flyng
Out of hys garner spryng
Our maydens shal eke pinche hym so
That hym shal neden fethers mo
And make hym selle his londe to spende
But be the bette canne hym defende.

Yet men han made her lorde of me
Al though they nat so mighty be
That they may fyghte me in bataylle
I wol not have hem in despyte
No good man hateth hem, as I gesse
For thynche and friquin is Kychesse
That so canne chaffe hem and blesse
And hem beswike in sondrye wyse
They lovers ful bette, so god me spede
Than bothe the tyche chynchy gyrde
And bene in good fayth more stable
And trewer, and more serviable
And therfore is sufferyth me
Her goodhede, and her beaute
They han on me set al her thought
And therfore I forgete hem nought
I wol hem bringe in great noblesse
If that I were god of Kychesse
As I am god of Love forsoth
Sothe ruthe upon her playnt have I
Therfore I muse his secret be
That parteth hym to fremde me
For yf he beyed for lone of this
Than fremeth in me no lone there is

But sothe they, sothe is every dele
That ye erbeter, and we worse wele
Thylke othe to holde is reasonable
For it is good and covenable
That ye on tyche men han swore
For sir, this wote we wel before
If tyche men done you homage

That

That is as fooles done outrage
But ye shul not forswome be
Ne let therfore to drinke clarry
Or pyment maked fresshe and newe
Ladyes shul hem suche pepyr brewe
Yf that they fall in to her laas
That they for wo mowe sayne alas
Ladyes shullen euer so curteys be
That they shal quite your othe all free
Ne seketh neuer other bycayte
For they that speake with him so fayre
That ye shal holde you payde ful wele
Though ye you medle neuer a dele
Let ladyes worche with her thynges
They shal hem tel so fele tydynges
And mowe hem eke so many requestes
By flattery, that not honest is
And thertoo yeue hem suche thankynges
With worth ayfyng, and with talkynges
That certes if they trowed be
Shal neuer leaue hem londe ne fee
That it nil as the moeble fare
Of whiche they stil delyuered are
Sawe may you tel bs all your wyll
And we your beddes shal fullfyll.

Dissemblaunce hard not for drede
Of non sir, medle him of this dede
I pray (quod he) that ye ben bis to
Me nor, yf ye wil worche him wo
Ne beware the praye you al beautee
But ye for yeue him nothe your ire
And that he may dwel as your man
With Bialcomeuce his dere leman
This our accorde and our wyl nowe
Quod fayre semblaunt I ouc, I graunt it you
I shal wel holde him for my man
Now let him come, and be forth than
Faire semblaunt qd I ouc in this wyse
I take the here to my seruice
That thou our frendes helpe alway
And hinderth hem neyther nyght ne day
But be thy myght hem to grieue
And our enemyes that thou greue
Thow be this nught, I graunt it the
Quod hyng of harlotes shalt thou be
Lo wel that thou haue suche honour
Certayne thou arte a false traytour
And eke a thefe, & the thou were borne
A thousande tymes thou art forswome
But natheles in our beryng
Coput out folke out of doutyng
I pyth the truthe hem, wolt thou bolwe
By some general signe nowe
In what place thou shalt founden be
Yf that men had myster of the
And howe men shal the best espye
For the to knowe is great maistrye
Tell in what place is thine haunteyng
Sir I haue ful dyuers wonneyng
That I kepe not reherseb be
So that ye wolde respyten me
For if that I tell you the sothe
I may haue harme and shame bothe
Yf that my felowes wysten it
My tales shulden me be quit
For certayne they wolde hate me
Yf euer I knewe her crueltee
For they wolde ouer al holde hem stil
Of trouthe, that is agayne her wyll
Suche tales kepen they not here
I myght eftesone bye it ful dere
Yf I sayde of hem any thyng
That ought displeaseth to her herynge
For what wolde that hem pricketh or greueth
In that worde none of hem beleeueth
Al were it gospel the euangyle
That wolde reprouue hem of her gyle
For they are cruel and haurayne
And thys thynge wote I wel certayne
Yf I speake ought to payre her loos
Your counte shal not so wel be doos
That therfor shall wyte it ar laste
I good men am I nought agaste
For they wel taken on hem nothing
Al that they know al my meanyng
But he that wolde on him take
He wolde him selfe suspecyous make
That he has lyte let coverte
In gyle and in Ypocrisy
That me engendred and yaue to lyuyng
They made a ful good engendryng
Quod I ouc for who so seeth trouthe
They engendred the dyuel of helle.

But nedely how so euer it be
Quod I ouc I wyl and charge the
Or tel anon thy wonnyng places
Hereyng echo wight that in this place is
And what lyfe thou lyuest also
Hyde it no lenger fro me, wherfore
Thou must discouer al thy wurchyng
How thou fetest, and of what thyng
Though that thou thuldest for thy soth sawe
Bene alto beaten and to drawe
And yet art thou not wont parde

Ll 1. But

But natheleſſe, though thou beten be
Thou ſhalt not be the firſt that ſo
Hath for forthſawe ſuffred wo.

Sir, ſythe that it may lyken you
Though that I ſhulde be ſlayne right nowe
I ſhal done your commaundement
For therto haue I great talent.

Withouten wordes mo, right than
Falſe Semblant his ſermon began
And ſaid hem thus in audyence
Barons, take hede of my ſentence
That wight that lyſt to haue knowyng
Of falſe Semblant, full of flatterynge
He muſte in worldly folke him ſette
And certes in the cloiſters ete
I wot no where, but in hem tweyn
But not lyke euen, forthe to ſayn
Shortely I wol herberowe me
There I hope beſt to huſſtred be
And certaynly, ſyth erſt bydyng
I ſe underneth brumbleſt clothyng
Religyous folke bene ful couerte
Seculer folke bene more appette
But natheleſſe, I wol not blame
Religyous folke, ne hem diffame
In what habyte that euer they go
Religyon humble, and trewe alſo
Will I not blame, ne diſpyſe
But I am lowe as in no wyſe
I meane of falſe religyous
That doure ben, and malycyous
That wollen in an habyte go
And ſeruen not her herte therto.

Religyous folke ben al pytous
Thou ſhalte not ſene one diſpytous
They louen no pride ne no ſtryfe
But humbly they wol lede her lyfe
With whiche folke wol I neuer be
And yf I dwell, I fayne me
I may well in her habyte go
But me were leuer myſchefe atwo
Than leſſe a purpoſe that I take
What couenaunt that euer I make
I dwell with hem that proude be
And ful of wyles and ſubtilte
That worſhyp of this worlde coueyten
And great nede comen eryeyten
And gon and gaderen great pyraunces
And purchace hem the acqueyntaunces
Of men that mighty lyfe may leden
And fayne hem poze, and hem ſelfe leden
With good morcels delycious
And drunken good wyne precyous
And preche vs pouert and diſtreſſe
And tyſthen hem ſelfe great rycheſſe
With wyly nettes, that they caſte
It wol come foule out at the laſte
They ben tro clene religion wente
They make the worlde an argumente
That hath a foule concluſyon
I haue a robe of religyon
Than am I all religyous
This argument is all roignous
It is not worthe a croked bire
Habyte ne maketh neyther monke ne frere
But clene lyfe and deuocion
Maketh good men of religyon
Natheleſſe, there can none anſwere
Howe hygh that euer his hed he bere
With caſoun inherited neuer ſo kene
That gyle in braunches cutte thurtene
There can no wight diſcrete it ſo
That he dare ſay a worde therto.
But what herberowe we that euer I take
Or what ſemblant that euer I make
I meane but gyle, and ſolowe that
For wyght no more than gybbe our cat
(That alwayeth myce & ratteſ to kylle)
Ne ryuende I but to begyle
For no wight may, by my clothyng
Wete with what folke is my dwellyng
Ne by my wordes yet parde
So ſotte and ſo pleſaunt they be
Ne ſo be the bedes that I bo
But thou be blynde thou oughteſt ſo
For barre her wordes fro her hede
They thinke on gyle without drede
What maner clothyng that they were
Or what eſtate that euer they bere
Lorde or lorde, lorde or laby
Knyght, ſquyer, burgeys, or bayly

Right thus while falſe Semblant ſermoneth
Of his fones Loue him arſoneth
And blame his tale in his ſpeakyng
As though he had him rolde leaſyng
And ſaid: What dyuel is that I here?
What folke haſte thou vs hempard here
Haue men fynde religioun
In worldly habyt actioun?
Ye ſir it ſolloweth nat that they
Shulde leade a wicked lyfe parfey
Ne not therfore her ſoules leſe

That

That hem to worldly clothes chese
For certes it were great pyte
Men may in secular clothes se
Florishen holy religioun
Ful many a saint in felde and towne
With many a virgyn glorious
Deuoute, and ful religious
Pan dyed, that commen clothe aye beren
Yet saynes neuertheleſſe they weren
I coude reckon you many a ten
Pe weinygh al these holy women
That men in churches herry and seke
Pothe maydens, and these wyues eke
That baren ful many a fayre childe here
Rated alway clothes seculere
And in the same dyden they
That saintes weren, and ben alway.

¶ Pe it thousande maydens here
That beren in heuen her clerges clere
Of whiche men rede in churche and syng
Were take in seculer clothyng
Whan they ne feryed matrymonie
And women heuen vnto her home
Good hert maketh the good thought
Pe clothyngt yeueth ne reueth nought
The good thought and the worchyng
That maketh the religion flouryng
Pere lyeth the good religioun
Nat the vyghte engendroun.

Who so toke a wethers skynne
And wrapped a grete wolfe therinne
For he should go with lambes where
Ween thou not he wolde hem byte?
Pes: Neuertheleſſe, as he were wode
He wold hem worry, and drinke the blode
And wel the rather hem bigyle
For sithe they coude nat perceyue
His craft, ne his crueltie
They wold him folowe al the bet syr.

If there be wolues of suche hewe
Amonges these apostles newe
Thou holy churche & mayste be wayled
Sythe that thy cure is assayled
Through hypocrites of thyne owne table
God wot thy lordshyp is bestable
If they enforce it to win
That shulde defende it fro within
Who might defence ayenst hem make
Without stroke it more be take
Perrepeger or mangonel
Without displayeng of penſel
And if god nyl done it socour
But let renne in this colour
Thou must thy heestes letten be
Than is there nought, but yelde the
Or yeue him tribute doubles
And holde it of hem to haue pees
But greater harme betyde the
That they al maister of it be
Wel con they scorne the with hall
By day stuffen they the wall
And al the nyght they mynen there
Nay, thou planten muste eis where
Thyne ympes, if thou wolt fruite haue
Abyde not there thy selfe to saue.

Bit now peace, here I turne againe
I wol no more of this thinge saine
Yf I may passen me hereby
I might maken you merry
But I wol hetten you alway
To helpe your frendes what I may
So they wollen my company
For they be shent al verely
But it so fal, that I be
Pe with hem, and they with me
And eke my lemman more they serue
Or they shul not my loue deserue
Forsoth I am a false traytour
God iudged me for a thefe perdoune
Forsworne I am, but wel nygh none
Ne one of my gyle, ryght be done.

Whom me hath many one deth reached
That my treget neuer aperceyued
And yet receyueth, and shal receyue
That my falsnesse shal neuer aperceyue
But who so doth, if he wise be
Him is right good be ware of me
But so slyghe is the apperceyuyng
That al to late cometh knowyng
For Proteus that coude him chaunge
In euery shappe, homely and straunge
Coude neuer such gyle ne treasoune
As I, for I come neuer in towne
Pere as I myght knowen be
Though men me bode mighte here se
Ful wel I can my clothes chaunge
Take one, and make another straunge
Now am I knyght, now chastelayne
Now prelate, and now chaplayne
Now preest, now clerke, now fostere
Now am I maister, now scholere
Now monke, now chanon, now bayly

Ful. What

Unneth that he nys a mycher
Forsworne, or elis goddes lyer
Thus saith Salomon sawes
Ne we fynde written in no lawes
And namely in our christen laye
Who saith ye, I dare say naye
That Christ, ne his apostels dere
While that they walked in erthe here
Were neuer seen herbred beggyng
For they nolden beggen for nothyng
And right thus were men wont to teche
And in this wyse wolde it preche
The maisters of dyuinyte
Somtyme in Parys the cyte.

And if men wolde there gayne appose
The naked texte and let the glose
It might soone assoyled be
For men may wel the sothe se
That parde they myght aske a thynge
Plainly forth without beggynge
For they weren goddes heerdes dere
And cure of soules haddon here
They nolde nothyng begge her foode
For after Christ was done on roode
With their proper hondes they wrought
And with trauayle, and els nought
They wonnen al her sustenaunce
And lyueden forth in her penaunce
And the remenaunt yaf awaye
To other poore folkes alwaye
They neither bylden towre ne halle
But they in houses smal with alle
A myghty man that can and maye
Shuld with his honde & body alway
Wynne him his foode in labourynge
Yf he ne haue rent or suche a thyng
Although he be relygious
And god to seruen curious
Thus mote he done, or do trespas
But if it be in certayne caas
That I can rehercе, if myster be
Right wel, whan the tyme I se.

Seke the boke of sayute Austyne
Be it in paper or perchemene
There as he writte of these worchynges
Thou shalt sene that none excusynges
A perfyte manne shuld seke
By wordes, ne by dedes eke
Although he be relygious
And god to seruen curyous
That he ne shal, so mote I go
With proper hondes, and body also
Get his foode in laboryng
Yf he ne haue proprete of thyng
Yet shuld he sel al his substaunce
And with his swynke haue sustenaunce
If he be parfyte in bonnte
Thus han the bokes tolde me
For he that wol gone ydelly
And vseth it aye besyly
To haunten other mennes table
He is a trechour ful of fable
Ne he ne may by good reason
Excuse him by his orison
For men behoueth in some gyse
Ben somtyme in goddes seruise
To gone and purchasen her nede
Men mote eaten, that is no drede
And slepe, and eke do other thyng
So long may they leaue prayeng
So may they eke her prayer dilyne
Whyle ỳ they werke her meate to wynne
Seint Austyn wol therto accorde
In thylke boke that I recorde
Iustinian eke, that made lawes
Hath thus forboden by olde sawes

No man, by payne to be deed
Mighty of body, to begge his breed
Yf he may swynke it for to gete
Men shuld him rather maime or bete
Or done of him a perte iustyce
Than suffren him in suche malyce
They done not wel so more I go
That taken suche almesse so
But if they haue some priuilege
That of the payne hem wol alege
But howe that is, can I not se
But if the prince dispensed be
Ne I ne wene not sykerly
That they may haue it rightfully
But I wol not determyne
Of princes power, ne defyne
Ne by my worde comprehende swis
Yf it so frete may stretche in this
I wol not entermete a dele
But I trowe that the boke saith wele
Who that taketh almesse, that be
Dewe to folke that men may se
Lame, feble, wery, and bare
Poore, or in suche maner care
That con wynne hem neuer mo
For they haue no power therto
He taketh his owne damnynge

But

But yf he lye, that made al thyng
And yf ye suche a truaunt fynde
Chastyse hym wel, yf ye be kynde
But they wolde hate you parcaas
If ye fyllen in her laas
They wolde eftsones do you scathe
If that they myght, late or rathe
For they be not ful patient
That han the worlde thus foule blent
And weneth wel, that god bad
The good man sel al that he had
And folowe him, and to poore it yeue
He wolde not therfore that he lyue
To seruen hym in mendience
For it was neuer his sentence
But he bad werken, whan that nede is
And folowe hym in good dedes
Saint Poule that loued al holy church
He bade the apostels for to wurch
And warnen her lyuelode in that wyse
And hem defended truandyse
And sayd, werketh with your honden
Thus shulde the thyng be vnderstonden
He nolde nat his haue by hem beggyng
Ne sellen gospel, ne prechyng
Lest they beraste, with her askyng
Folke of her catel or of her thyng
For in this worlde is many a man
That yeueth hys good, for he nil can
Werne it for shame, or els he
Wolde of the asker delyuered be
And for he hym encombreth so
He yeueth hym good to let hym go
But it cau hym nothyng profyte
They lese the yefte and the merite
The good folke that Poule to preched
Profred hym ofte, whan he hem treched
Some of her good in charite
But therof eyght nothyng toke he
But of hys honde wolde he gette
Clothes to wrine hym and hys mete.

Tel me than howe a man may liuen
That al his good to poore hath yeuen
And wol but onely bydde hys bedes
And neuer with hondes labour his nedes
May he do so? Ye sir: And howe?
Sir: I wol gladly tel you
Saint Austen sayth, a man may be
In houses that han properte
Is templers, and hospytelers
And as these chanons regulers
Or whyte monkes, or these blacke
I wol no mo ensamples make
And take the therof hys susteynyng
For therin lythe no beggyng
But otherwayes not yuis
Yet Austen gabbeth not of this
And yet ful many a monke laboureth
That god in holy churche honoureth
For whan her swynkyng is agon
They rede and syng in churche anone

And for there hath ben great discorde
As many a wyght may beare recorde
Upon the estate of mendience
I wol shortely in your presence
Tel howe a man may begge at nede
That hath not wherwith him to fede
Maugre hys felowes langynges
For sothfastnesses wol none hy dynges
And yet percase I may obey
That I to you sothly thus sey.

LO here the case especial
If a man be so bestial
That he of no craft hath science
And nought desyreth ignorance
Than may he go a beggyng yerne
Tyl he some other craft can lerne
Through whiche without truandyse
He may in trouthe haue hys lyuyng
Or if he may done no labour
For elde, or sickenesse, or langour
Or for his tender age also
Than may he yet a beggyng go
Or if he haue peraventure
Through vsage of hys nourture
Lyued ouer delycously
Than oughten good folke comenly
Han of hys mischefe some pyte
And suffren hym also, that he
May gon about and begge his bred
That he be not for honger ded
Or if he haue of craft conning
And strength also, and desyryng
To worchen, as he had what
But he fynde neither this ne that
Than may he begge tyl that he
Haue gotten hys necessitee
Or if hys wynnyng be so lyte
That hys labour wol not aquyte
Sufficiauntly al hys lyuyng
Yet may he go his bede beggyng
Fro dore to dore, he may go trace
Tyl he the remnaunt may purchase

Or if a man wolde vndertake
Any empryse for to make
In the cestous of our lay
And it defenden, as he may
Be it with armes, or lettrure
Or other conuenable cure
If it be so he poore be
Thou may he begge, tyl that he
May finde in trouth for to swynke
And get him clothe, meate, and drinke
Swynke he with his hondes corporel
And not with hondes espirituel.

In all this case, & in semblables
If ỳ there ben mo reasonables
Be may beg, as I tell you here
And eis not, in no maner
As William sayne Amour wolde preche
And ofte wolde despure and teche
Of thys matter al openly
At Paris ful solempnly
And also god my soule bleste
As he had in this stedfastnesse
The malice of the vniuersyte
And of the people, as semeth me.

No good man ought it to refuse
Ne ought hem therof to excuse
Be in stocke or birthe, whoso he be
For I wot spede, and trewe the
Al thulke I dye, and be put doun
As was sayne poule in bertke prisoun
Or be exiled in this cease
Vnto strange, as maister William was
That my mother Hypocrise
Banished for her great enuye.

My mother stirred hem saluue Amour
This noble bib suche labour
To sustayne cure the lovaute
That he to muche agrite me
Be made a boke, and let it write
Of erroures lyfe he byd al wrote
And wolde eche renerb begging
And lyue by my trauayling
If I me had rent ne other good
What weneth he that I were wood
For labour might me neuer plese
I haue more wyl to ben at ese
And haue me leuer, sothe to say
Before the people patter and play
And wrye me in my foxerye
Vnder a cope of papelardye.

(O Loue) what diuel is this ỳ I here
What wordes telleth thou me here
What sir Falsenesse that apert is
Than diedest thou not god Ne certis
For pride in great thing shal be spede
In this worlde, that god wol diede
For folke that hem to bertue yeuen
And truely on her owne lyuen
And hem in goodnesse aye contente
On hem is luel thilke yscene
Suche folke diuyken great misese
That lyfe may me neuer plese
But se what golde han diuers
And siluer eke in garners
Auocates, and these moneyours
Bayliffes, bedels, prouost, countours
These lyuen wel nygh by rauyne
The smale people hem more enclyne
And they as wolues wol hem eten
Vpon the poore folke they geten
Ful muche of that they spende or kepe
Is none of hem that he nyl stirpe
And wynne hem selfe wel at ful
Without stalding, they hem pul
The stronge the feble ouergothe
But I that weare my symple clothe
Robbe bothe robbyng and robbours
And gyle gyling, and gylours
By my forger, I gather and thrifte
The great treasour in to my chefte
That verth with me so fast bounde
Vpon bigh paleys do I founde
And my bestes I fulfyll
Al vnto myne at lesses, at my wyll
And tables ful of entremets
I wol no lift, but ease and pees
And wynne golde to spende also
For whan the great bagge is go
It cometh ryght with my lapes
Shake I not wel tombe my napes
To wynnen is alway myn entente
My purchace is better than my rente
For though I thulke beten be
Hurt al I entremet me
Without me may no wight hurte
I make soules for to curte
Of al the worlde cure haue I
In bertde and length boldly
I wol bothe preche, and eke counterpleade
With hondes wol I not trauayle
For of the pope I haue the bul
Me holde not my wittes dul
I wol not flyuten in my lyue

Thefe

These Emperours for to shryue
Of kynges, dukes, and lordes grete
But poore folke al quite I lete
I loue no suche shriuing parde
But it for other cause be
I reche not of poore men
Her estate is not worthe an hen
Wher findest thou a swynker of labour
Haue me to his confessour
But Empresses, and duchesses
These quenes, and eke countesses
These abbesses, and eke bygyns
These great ladyes palasyns
These ioly knyghtes, and baruines
These nonnes, and these burgeys wines
That riche ben, and eke pleasyng
And their maydens welfarying
Where so they clad or naked be
Vncounsayled gothe there none fro me
And for her soules sauete
Ilorde and lady, and her meyne
I aske, whan they hem to me shryue
The propertie of al her lyue
And make hem trowe, doth moste a leest
Her parysshe preest is but a beest
Ayens me and my company
That shrewes ben as great as I
For whiche I wol not be in holde
No priuete that me is tolde
That I by worde or sygne wiste
But wol make hem knowe what it is
And they wollen also tellen me
Ther hele fro me no priuyte
And for to make you hem perceyuen
That vsen folke thus to deceyuen
I wol you sayne withouten drede
What men maye in the gospel rede
Of sayne Mathewe the gospelleer
That sayethe, As I shal you say heer.

Vpon the chayre of Moyses
Thus it is gloted douteles
That is the olde testament
For therby is the chayre ment
Vnto Scribes and Pharyseis
That is to sayne, the cursed meis
Whiche that we ypocrites call
Dothe that they preche I rede you al
But dothe not as they done a deie
That deme not werry to say weie
But to do wel, no wyl haue they
And they wolde bynde no folke alway
That beue to begyled able
Burdons that beue importable
On folkes shulders thynges they couchen
That they nyl with her fyngers touchen
And why wol they not touche it wyte
For hem ne lyste nat sykerly
For sadde burdons that men taken
Make folkes shulders aken
And if they do ought that good be
That is for folke it shulde se
Her burdons larger maken they
And maken her hemmes wyde alway
And loure seates at the table
The first, and moste honourable
And for to haune the first chayris
In synagogges, to hem ful deere is
And wollen that folke hem loure & greete
Whan that they passen through the streete
And wollen be cleped maister also
But they ne shulde not wollen so
The gospel is there agayns I gesse
That sheweth wel her wickednesse

Another custome vse we
Of hem that wol ayenst vs be
We hate hym deedly euery chone
And we wol werrey hym as one
Hym that one hateth, hate we al
And conseyle, howe to done hym fal
And if we sene hym wynne honour
Ryches or pris se, through his valour
Disclaundre, enuy, or despite
Ful faile vnus compasse we
By what ladder he is clomben so
And for to maken hym downe to go
With trayson we wol hym defame
And done hym lese his good name
Thus from his ladder we him take
And thus his frendes fors we make
But worde ne were that he none
Tyl al his frendes ben his fone
For if we dyd it openly
We might haue blame redely
For had he wytte of our malyce
He had hym keper, but he were wyce

Another is this, that if so fal
That there be one among vs al
That doth a good turne, out of drede
We sayne it is out alder dede
Ne sykerly, though he it sayned
Or that hym lyste, or that hym dayned
I man through hem anaunced be
Chef of al parceners be we

And

And tellen folke, where so we go
That manne throughout is sprongen so
And for to haue of men praysing
We purchace through our flatteryng
Of tyche men of great poste
Letters, to witnesse our bounte
So that man wenneth that may vs se
That al vertue in vs be
And alway poore we vs fayne
But howe so that we begge or playne
Wt hen the folke without leasyng
That al thyng haue without hauyng
Thus we be dradde of the people ywis
And gladly my purpose is this.
I deale with no wight, but he
Haue golde and treasour great plente
Her acquayntaunce wel loue I
This muche my desyre shortely
I entremete me of brocages
I make peace, and mariages
I am gladly executour
And many tymes a procuratour
I am somtyme messagere
That falleth not to my mystere
And many tymes I make enquest
For me that office is nat honest
To deale with other mennes thyng
That is to me a great lykyng
And if that ye haue ought to do
In place that I repaire to
I shal it spedden through my witte
As sone as ye haue tolde me it
So that ye serue me to paye
My seruyce shalbe yours alwaye
But who so wol chastyce me
Anone my loue loste hath he
For I loue no man in no gyse
That wol me reprone or chastise
But I wol al folke undertake
And of no wight no teachyng take
For I that other folke chastye
Wol not be taught fro my folye.

I Loue none hermitage more
Al desertes, and holtes hoore
And great woodes euerychone
I let hem to ȳ baptyst John
I queth hym quite and hym relesse
Of Egipt al the wylderneesse
To ferre were al my mansyons
Fro al cities and good townes
My paleys and myne house make I
There men may renne in openly
And say that I the worlde forsake
But al amydde I bylde, and make
My house, a swimme and play therin
Bette than a fyche doth with his fynne.

Of Antechristes men am I
Of whiche that Christ sayth openly
They haue habyte of holyneesse
And lyuen in suche wickednesse
To the copye, if him talent toke
Of the Euangelystes booke
There myght be se by great trayssoun
Ful many a false comparisoun
As muche as through his great might
Be it of heate or of light
The sonne surmounteth the moone
That troubler is, and chaungeth soone
And the nutte kyrnel the shelle
I shownenat that I you telle
Right so withouten any gyle
Surmounteth this noble Euangyle
The worde of any Euangylist
And to her tyme they token Christ
And many suche comparisoun
Of whiche I make no mencioun
Myght men in that boke fynde
Who so coude of hem haue mynde

The vnsuersite that tho was a slepe
Gan for to brayde, and taken kepe
And at the noyse, the heed vp cast
Ne neuer sythen slept it fast
But vp it sterte, and armes toke
Ayenst this false horryble boke
Al redy batayle for to make
And to the Juge the boke they take
But they that broughten the boke there
Hent it anone away for fere
They nolde shewe it no more a dele
But than it kept, and kepen wele
Tyl suche a tyme that they may se
That they so stronge woren be
That no wight may hem wel withstonde
For by that boke they durst not stonde
Away they gonne it for to bere
For they ne durst not answere
By exposicion no gloose
To that that clerkes wol appose
Ayenst the cursednesse ywis
That in that boke writen is
Nowe wotte I nat, ne I can nat se
What maner ende that there shal be
Of al this that they hyde

But

But yet algate they shal abyde
Tyl that they maye it bette defende
Thys rowe I best wol be her ende

Thus Antechrist abyden we
For we bene all of hys meyne
And what manne that wol not be so
Right soone he shal hys lyfe forgo
Outwarde Lambren semen we
Ful of goodnesse and of pyte
And inwarde we withouten fable
Bene gredy wolues rauysable
We enuyroun bothe londe and se
With al the worlde wetryen we
We wol ordayne of al thyng
Of folkes good, and her lyuyng.

If there be castell or cytee
Wherin that any bougerons be
Although that they of Bylayne were
For therof bene they blamed there
Or of a wight out of measure
Wolde leane her golde, and take vsure
For that he is so coueytous
Or if he be to Lecherous
Or these that haunten Simonye
Or Prouost ful of trecherye
Or Prelate lyuyng iolylye
Or preest that hhit hys queyn hym by
Or olde hoores hostylers
Or other baudes or bordellers
Or els blamed of any vyce
Of whiche men shulden done iustyce
By al the sayntes that we prey
But they defende them with lamprey
With luce, with elys, with samons
With tender gees, and with capons
With tartes, or with cheffes fatte
With deynte flaunes, brode and flatte
With caleweys, or with pullayle
With conynges, or with fyne vytayle
That we vnder our clothes wyde
Maken through our golet glyde
Or but he wol do come in haste
Rae venison bake in paste
Whether so that loure or geyne
He shal haue of a corde a loygne
With whiche men shal hym bynde and lede
To bryngne hym for hys synful dede
That men shul here hym crye and roze
A myle way about and moze
Or els he shal in prison dye
But yf he wol hys freendshyp bye
Or smerten that, that he hath do
Moze than his gylte amounteth to
But and he couthe, throughhis sleight
Do maken vp a toure of height
Nought tought I, whether of stone or tre
Or erthe, or turues though it be
Though it were of no bounde stone
Wrought with squyer and francstone
So that the toure were stuffed wel
With al ryches temporel
And then that he wolde vp dresse
Engyns, bothe moze and lesse
To caste at vs bryeuely syde
To bere hys good name wyde
Suche sleyghtes I shal you reuen
Barelles of wine, by fyue or seuen
Or golde in sackes great plente
He shulde soone delyuered be
And yf he haue no suche pryuetes
Let hym study in eqnipolences
And lerne lyes and fallaces
If that he wolde deserue our graces
Or we shal beare hym suche witnesse
Of synne, and of his wrecchednesse
And done hys lose so wyde renne
That al quycke we shulde hym brenne
Or els yeue hym suche penaunce
That is wel worse than the pryuaunce

For thou shalt neuer for nothyng
Conknowen a tryght by her clothyng
The traytours ful of trecherye
But thou her werkes can espye
And ne had the good seynt Spyryt
Whylom of the vnyuersyte
That keepeth the key of chrystendome
We had bene turmented al and some
Suche bene the lyenkyng prophetes
Als none of hem, that good prophete is
For they through wicked entencion
The yere of the incarnacyon
A thousande and two hundred yere
Fyue and fyfte ferther ne nere
Broughten a boke with sory grace
To yeuen ensample in commen place
That sayd thus, though it were fable
This is the gospel pardurable
That fro the holy goste is sent
Wel were it worthe to ben brent
Entytled was in suche manere
This boke, of whiche I tel here
There nas no wyght in al Paris
Before our Lady at parys

That

That they ne might the booke by
The sentence pleased hem wel trewely
But I wol stynte of this matere
For it is wonder longe to here
But hadde that silke booke endured
Of better estate I were ensured
And frendes haue I yet parde
That han me sette in great degre

Of al this worlde is Emperour
Syre my father, the trechour
And Empresse my mother is
Nature the holy goost wrts
Our mighty image, and our route
Reigneth in euery reigne aboute
And wel is worthy we mynistres be
For al this worlde gouerne we
And can the folke so wel deceyue
That none our gyle can perceyue
And though they done, they dare not say
The sothe dare no wight bewray
But he in Chirches wrathe him lesteth
That more than Christ my brethren dredeth
For nys no ful good champion
That dredeth suche simulation
Nor that for payne wol refusen
To correcte and accusen
He wol not entremete by right
Or haue god in his eye sight
And therfore god shal him punyce
But me ne recketh of no vyce
Sythen men vs louen comunably
And holden vs for so worthy
That we may folke reprene echone
And we nel haue reprefe of none
Whom shulden folke worshipen so
But vs that stynten neuer mo
To patren, whyle that folke may vs se
Though it not so behynde hem be

And where is more woode folye
Than to enhaunce chyualrye
And loue noble men and gay
That foly clothes weren alway
If they be suche folke as they semen
So clene, as men her clothes demen
And that her wordes folowe her dede
It is great pyte out of drede
For they wol be none hypocrytis
Of hem me thinketh great spyte is
I can not loue hem on no syde
But beggers with these hoodes wyde
With sleigh and pale faces leane
And graye clothes nat ful cleane
But frotted ful of tatarwaggys
And high shoes knopped with daggys
That frounsen lyke a quayle pype
Or bootes cruchyng as a gype
To suche folke, as I you deuise
Shulde princes and these lordes wise
Take al her landes and her thinges
Bothe warre and peace in gouernynges
To suche folke shulde a prynce him yeue
That wolde his lyfe in honour lyue.

And yf they be nat as they seme
That serueu thus the worlde to queme
There wolde I dwel to deceyue
The folke, for they shal nat perceyue
But I ne speke in no suche wyse
That men shulde humble habite dispise
So that no pride there vnder be
No man shulde hate, as thinketh me
The pore man in suche clothynge
But god ne preyseth him nothynge
That sayth he hath the worlde forsake
And hath to worldely glorie him take
And wol of suche delyces vse
Who may that begger wel excuse?
That papelarde, that him yeldeth so
And wol to worldely ease go
And sayth that he the worlde hath lefte
And gredily it griperth efte
He is the honde, shame is to sayne
That to his callyng goth agayne.

But vnto you dare I not lye
But myght I felen or espye
That ye perceyued it nothyng
Ye shulde haue a starke leasyng
Right in your honde thus to begynne
I nolde it lette for no synne
The god loughe at the wonder tho
And euery wight game laugh also
And sayde: Lo here a manne wyght
For to be trusty to euery wyght

Hast semblant (q̄ ō Lone) say to me
Sithe I thus haue auaunced the
That in my courte is thy dwellyng
And of ribaudes shalt be my kyng
Wolt thou wel holden my forwardes?
Ye sir, from hence forwardes
We wol a people vpon hym areyse
And through our gyle, done hym leese
And hym on sharpe speares tyne

Or

Or other wayes bring him fro hyne
But if that he wol folowe my wis
That in our boke wytten is.

Thus muche wol our booke signifye
That while Peter hath maistrye
May neuer Johan shewe wel his myght
Now haue I you declared right
The meanyng of the barke and rynde
That maketh the entencions blynde
But nowe at erst I wol begyn
To expowne you the pythe within
And the seculers comprehende
That Christes lawe wol defende
And shulde it kepen and maynteinen
Ayenst hem that al sustenen
And falsly to the people techen
That Johan betokeneth hem to prechen
That there nis lawe couenable
But thilke gospell pardurable
That fro the holy goste was sent
Conforme folke that ben mis went.

The strength of Johan they vnderstonde
The grace in which they say they stonde
That doth the synful folke conuerte
And hem to Jesu Christ reuerte
Ful many an other horrible
May men in that booke se
That ben commaunded doutelesse
Ayenst the lawe of Rome expresse
And all with Antichrist they holden
As men may in the booke beholden
And than commaunden they to sleen
All tho that wyth Peter ben
But they that neuer haue that myght
And god to forme, for stryfe to fyght
That they ne shall ynough fynde
That Peters lawe shal haue in mynde
And euer holde, and so maynteine
That at the laste it shal be seine
That they shall all come thertto
For aught that they can speke or do
And thilke lawe shal not stonde
That they by Johan haue vnderstonde
But maugre hem, it shall aboun
And ben brought to confusioun
Had neuer your father here before
Seruaunt so erre we, sythe he was borne
That is ayenst all nature
But put you in that aventure
For though ye borowes take of me
The sykerer shall ye neuer be
For hostages, ne sykernesse
Or chartres, for to beare wytnesse
I take your selfe to recorde here
That men ne may, in no manere
Teren the wolfe out of his hyde
Tyl he be slayne, backe and syde
Though men him beate and al defyle
What wene ye that I wol begyle
For I am clothed rudely
Ther vnder is al my trechery
Ayne herte chaungeth neuer the mo
For none habyt, in which I go
Though I haue there of symplenesse
I am not wery of shrewdnesse
My lemman, straynes Abstenaunce
Hath myster of my purueyaunce
She had ful longe ago be dede
Nere my counsayle and my rede
Let her alone, and you and me
And Loue answerde, I trust the
Without borowe, for I wol none
And false Semblant the thefe anone
Right in that ilke same place
That had of treason al his face
Right blacke within, and white without
Thankyng him, gan on his knees loute.

Than was there nought, but euery man
Howe to assaute, that sayen can
Quod Loue and that ful hardely
Than armed they hem comenly
Of suche armour, as to hem fell
When they were armed, fiers and fell
They went hem forth al in a route
And set the castel al aboute
They wyl not away for no drede
Tyl it so be that they ben dede
Or tyl they haue the castel take
And four batels they gan make
And parted hem in four anone
And toke her way, and forth they gone
The foure gates for to assayle
Of whiche the kepers wol not fayle
For they ben neither sycke ne dede
But hardy folke, and stronge in dede.

Nowe wol I saine the countrenaunce
Of false Semblant, and Abstynaunce
That ben to wicked tonge went
But first they helde her parlyment
Whether it to doue were
To maken hem be knowen there
Or elis walken fayth disgysed

But at the laste they deuyſed
That they wolde gone in rappynage
As it were in a pylgrymage
Lyke good and holy folke vnfeyned
And dame Idleynesse fayned
Toke on a robe of Camelyne
And gan her gratche as a bygyne
A large couerchiefe of threde
She wrapped al about her hede
But she forgate not her pfalitere
A payre of beedes eke she bere
Upon a lace, al of whyte threde
On whiche that she her beedes bede
But she ne bought hem neuer a dele
For they were gyuen her, I wote wele
God wote of a ful holy freere
That sayde he was her father dere
To whom she had afore went
Than any freere of his conuent
And he vsyed her also
And many a sermon sayd her to
He nolde let for man on lyue
That he ne wolde her ofte thyue
And with so great deuocyon
They made her confession
That they had ete for the nones
Two heedes in one hoode at ones
Of fayre shappe, I deuyse d her the
But pale of face sometyme was she
That false trayteresse vntrewe
Was lyke that salowe horse of hewe
That in the Apocalips is shewed
That signifieth the folke beshrewed
That ben al ful of treecherye
And pale, through hipocrisye
For on that horse no colour is
But onely dead and pale ywis
Of suche a colour enangoured
Was Idleynesse ywys coloured
Of her estate she her repented
As her vysage represented
She had a burbolone al of thefte
That Gyle had reue her of hys yefte
And a scrippe of fayner brederesse
That ful was of enuyenerie
And forth she walked sobrely
And False Semblant fayre, ie vous dy
And as it were for suche mattere
Done on the cope of a freere
With chere symple, and full pytous
His lokyng was not disdeynous
Ne proude, but meke and full pesyble
Aboute hys necke he bare a byble
And squiedly, forth gan he gon
And for to rest his tyrmues vpon
He had of treason a potent
As he were feble, his way he went
But in his sleue he gan to thrust
A rasour sharpe, and wel bytyng
That was forged in a forge
Which that men clepen Coupe gorge
So longe forthe her waye they nomen
Tyll they to Wycked Tonge comen
That at his gate was syttyng
And sawe folke in the waye passyng
The pylgrymes sawe he faste by
That beren hem full meekely
And humbly they wyth hym mette
Dame Idleynesse fyrste hym grette
And sythe hym False Semblant salued
And he hem, but he not remeued
For he ne dredde hem not a dele
For whan he sawe her faces wele
Alwaye in herte, him thought so
He shulde knowe hem bothe two
For wel he knewe dame Idleynesse
But he ne knewe not Constreynesse
He knewe nat that she was constrayned
Ne of her theues lyfe fayned
But wende she come of wyll all free
But she come in another degree
And yf of good wyll she beganne
That wyll was fayled her thanne.

And False Semblant had he sayne all
But he knewe nat that he was false
Yet false was he, but his falsnesse
He coude he nat espye, nor gesse
For Semblant was so slye wrought
That Falsenesse he ne espyed nought
But haddest thou knowen him before
Thou woldest on a boke haue swore
Whan thou him sawgh in thilke araye
That he, that whilom was so gaye
And of the daunce Joly Robyn
Was tho become a Jacobyn
But sothely what so men him call
Freere Prechours bene good men all
Her order wickedly they beren
Suche mynstrelles, if they weren
So ben Augustyns, and Cordyleers
And Carmes, and eke sacked freers
And al freers shodde and bare
Though some of hem bene great and square
Ful holy men, as I hem deme
Euerych of hem wolde good man seme

But

But thate thou never of apparence
Sene conclude good consequence
In none argument ywis
Yf reulens al fayled is
For men maye fynde alwaye sophesme
The consequence to enuenemne
Who so that hath hadde the subtelte
The double sentence for to se.

Whan the pylgrymes commen were
To Wycked Conge that dwelled there
Her harneys myght hem was algate
Wycked tonge adowne they sate
That badde hem nomore him for to come
And of erdynges telle him some
And sayde hem: What cause maketh you
To come in to this place nowe.

Sir sayd Seraymed Abstynaunce
We for to dryue out penaunce
Wythin eres pylous and denoute
Are commen, as pylgrimes gon aboute
Wel nyghe on foote alway we go
Ful doughty ben our heeles two
And thus bothe we ben shut
Throughout the world that is mis went
To yeue ensample, and preche also
To fysshen synful men we go
For other fysshynge, ne fysshe we
And sir, for that charite
As we be wonte, herbeforowe we crane
Your lyte to amende Christe it saue
And so it shulde you not displease
Ne wolden, if it were your ease
A shorte sermon vnto you sayne
And Wicked Tonge answered agayne
The house quod he (suche as ye se)
Shal nat be warned you for me
Say what you lyst, and I wol here
Graunt mercy (were sir dere

(Quod alderfirst) dame Abstynence
And thus began she her sentence.
Sir, the firste vertue certayne
The greatest, and moste souerayne
That may be founde in any man
For hauyng, or for wyt he can
That is his tonge to refrayne
Therto ought euery wight him payne
For it is better thyll be
Than for to speken harme parde
And he that harkeneth it gladly
He is no good man sykerly

And sir, aboven al other syune
In that arte thou moste gilty inne
Thou spake a tape, not longe a go
And sir, that was right yuell do
Of a yonge man, that here reparied
And neuer yet this place apayred
Thou saydest he awayted nothyng
But to dyscryue fayre Welcomyng
Ye sayd nothyng sothe of that
But sir, ye lye, I tel you plat
He ne cometh no more, ne gothe parde
I trowe ye shal him neuer se
Fayre Welcomyng in prison is
That ofte hath playd with you er this
The fayrest games that he coude
Without fyght fyl or loude
Nowe dare she not her selfe solace
Ye han also the man do chace
That he dare neyther come ne go
What meueth you to hate him so
But propertly your wycked thought
That many a false leasyng hath thought
That meueth your fonle eloquence
That iangleth euer in audience
And on the folke aryseth blame
And bothe hem dishonour and shame
For thynge that maye haue no preuyng
But lykelynesse, and coueryng.

For I dare sayne, that Reason demeth
It is not al sothe thynge that semeth
And it is tyme to countoue
Thynge that is to reproue
This wote ye wele, and sir therfore
Ye arne to blame the more
And marbele se, he reckeneth lyte
He yeueth not no we therof a myte
For yf he thought harme parfaye
He wolde come and gone all daye
He coude hym selfe not abstenoe
No we cometh he not, and that is sene
For he ne taketh of it no cure
But if it be through auenture
And lasse than other folke algate
And thou her watcheth at the gate
With speare in thyne arest alwaye
There muse musarde all the daye
Thou wakest nyght and daye for thought
I wys thy trauayle is for nought
And Ielousye wythouten fayle
Shall neuer quyte the thy trauayle
And skathe is, that fayre Welcomyng
Without any trespassyng

Shal wrongfully in prison be
There weepeth and languysheth he
And though thou neuer yet pwis
Agylteit man no more but this
Take nor a greke it were worthy
To put the out of this bayly
And afterwarde in prison lye
And fetred the tyl that thou dye
For thou shalte for thys synne dwelle
Right in the deuyls arse of helle
But yf that thou repente the
Wayfaye, thou lyest falsely (quod he)
What, welcome wyth myschaunce now
Haue I therfore herbered you
To saye me shame, and eke reproue
With sorye happe to youre behoue
Am I to day youre herbegere
Go herber you els where, than here
That han a lyer called me
Two traytours arte thou and he
That in myne house, do me this shame
And for my sothe sawe ye me blame
Is this the sermon that ye make
To all the deuels I me take
Or els god thou me confounde
But er men dydden this castell founde
It passeth nor ten dayes or twelue
But it was tolde right to my selue
And as they sayde, right so tolde I
Be kysse the Rose pryuyly
Thus sayde I now, and haue sayd yore
I not where he dyd any more
Why shulde men saye me suche a thyng
If it had ben gabbyng
Ryghte so sayde I, and woll saye yet
I trowe I lyed not of it
And with my bemes I woll blowe
To all neyghbours arowe
Howe he hath bothe comen and gone
Tho spake false Semblant right anone
All is not gospell oute of doute
That men sayne in the towne aboute
Lay no deefe eere to my spekyng
I swere you sir, it is gabbyng
I trowe ye wote well certaynly
That no man loueth him tenderly
That saith him harme, if he wote it
All be he neuer so poore of wit
And sothe is also sykerly
This knowe ye syr, as wel as I
That louers gladly wol bysyen
The places there her loues habyten
This man you loueth, and eke honoureth
This man to serue you laboureth
And clepeth you his frende so dere
And this man maketh you good chere
And euery where that you meteth
He you saleweth, and he you greteth
He preseth nat so ofte, that ye
Oughte of his comynge encombred be
There presen other folke on you
Ful ofter than he doth nowe
And yf hys herte hym strayned so
Unto the Rose for to go
Ye shulde hym sene so ofte nede
That ye shulde take hym with the dede
He coulde hys commynge not forbeare
Thoughe he him thrylled with a speare
It were not than, as it is nowe
But trusteth well, I sweare it you
That it is clene out of hys thought
Sir, certes he ne thynketh it nought
No more ne doth Fayre Welcomyng
That sore abyeth al this thyng
And yf they were of one assent
Full soone were the Rose hent
The maugre yours wolde be
And sir, of o thyng herkeneth me
Sythe ye thys man, that loueth you
Han sayde suche harme, and shame nowe
Wyteth well, yf he gessed it
Ye maye well demen in your wyt
He nolde nothynge loue you so
He callen you hys frende also
But nyghte and daye he woll wake
The castell to dystroye and take
Yf it were sothe, as ye deuyse
Or some manne in some maner wyse
Wyght it warne hym euerydele
Or by him selfe parcevue wele
For sythe he myght not come and gone
As he was whylom wonte to done
He myghte it soone wyte and se
But nowe all otherwyse wote he
Than haue we syr all vtterly
Deserued helle, and iolyly
The dethe of helle doutelesse
That thrallen folke so gyltelesse.

False Semblant so proueth thys thynge
That he can none answerynge
And seeth alwaye, suche apparaunce
That nyghe he fel in repentaunce
And sayd him, sir: it maye wel be
Semblant, a good man semen ye
And Abstynence, ful wyse ye seme

Of o talent you bothe I deme
What counsayle wol ye to me yeuen
Right here anon thou shalt be shriuen
And lay thy synne, without more
Of this shalt thou repent sore
For I am priest, and haue poste
To shriue folke of most dignite
That ben as wyde as worlde may dure
Of al this worlde I haue the cure
And that had neuer yet persoun
Ne vycarie of no maner toun
And god wot I haue of the
I thousande tymes more pyte
Than hath thy priest parochial
Though he thy frende be special
I haue auauntage in o wyse
That your prelates ben not so wyse
Ne halfe so lettred as am I)
I am ypensed boldely
In diuinite for to rede
And to confessen out of drede
Ye wol you nowe confesse
And leaue your synnes more and lesse
Without abode, knele downe anon
And you shal haue absolucion.

Finis.

Here endeth the Romaunt of the Rose: And here foloweth the boke of Troylus and Creseyde.

Troylus and Creseyde

THe double sorow of Troylus to tellen
That was kynge Priamus sonne of Troy
In louing, how his aduersitees fellen
From wo to wele, and after out of ioy
My purpose is, er that I parte froy
Thou Thesiphone, thou helpe me for tendite
These woful vers, that wepen as I write

To the I clepe, thou goddesse of torment
Thou cruel furye, sorowyng euer in payne
Helpe me that am the sorowful instrument
That helpeth louers, as I can complayne
For wel sit it, the soth for to sayne
A woful wight to haue a dreery fere
And to a sorowful tale a sory chere

For I that god of loues seruauntes serue
Ne dare to loue, for myne vnlyklynesse
Prayen for spede, al shulde I therfore sterue
So farre am I fro his helpe in derkenesse
But natheless, if this may done gladnesse
To any louer, and his cause auaile
Haue he my thanke, and myne be the trauaile

But ye louers that bathen in gladnesse
Y f any drope of pyte in you be
Remembreth you of passed heuinesse
That ye haue felte, and on the aduersitee
Of other folke, and thynketh how we that ye
Han felte, that loue durste you displease
Or ye han won him with to great an ease

And prayeth for hem that ben in the case
Of Troylus, as ye may after here
That he hem bringe in heuen to solace
And eke for me prayeth to god so dere
That I haue myght to shewe in some manere
Suche payne and wo, as loues folke endure
In Troylus vnsely auenture

And biddeth eke for hem that ben dispeyred
In loue, that neuer wol recouered be
And eke for hem that falsely ben apeyred
Through wycked tonges, be it he or she
Thus byddeth god for his benygnyte
So graunt hē soone out of this world to pace
That ben dispayred out of loues grace

And byddeth eke for hem that ben at ease

That god hem graūt aye good perseuerāūce
And sende hem grace her loues for to plaise
That it to loue be worthyp and plaisaunce
For so hope I my selfe best to auaunce
To pray for hem, that loues seruauntes be
And wyte her wo, and lyue in charite

And for to haue of hem compassyon
As though I were her owne brother dere
Nowe herkeneth with a good entencion
For nowe wol I go streight to my matere
In whiche ye may the double sorowes here
Of Troylus, in louynge of Creseyde
And howe she forsoke hym er þ she deyde.

IT is wel wist, how þ the grekes stōge
In armes th a thousande shippes wyde
To Troye wardes, and the cite longe
Besieged hem nyghe ten yeres er they ryde
And in diuers wyse, and one entent
The ramisshyng to wynne of quene Helayne
By Paris don, they wroughten al her peyne

Now fell it so, þ in the towne there was
Dwellyng a lorde of great auctorite
A great deuyne, that hyght was Calcas
That in that science so expert was, that he
Knewe wel, that Troye shulde distroyed be
By answere of his god, that hyght thus
Dan Phebus, or Apollo Delphicus

So whan this Calcas knew by calculyng
And eke by the answere of this god Apollo
That grekes shulde sucha peple bryng
The towne wherin that Troy muste be fro: bo
He caste anone out of the towne to go
For wel he wist by sorte, that Troye shulde
Distroyed be, þe worlde who so nolde

Wherfore to departen softely
Clene purpose ful this forsayd wyse
And to the Grekes host ful priuely
He stale anone, and they in curteis wyse
Dyd him both worshyp and seruyce
In trust that he hath conning hem to rede
In euery perel, which that was to drede

Great rumour rose, whan it was first espied
In al the towne, and openly was spoken
That Calcas traytour fled was and alyed
To hem of Grece, and cast was to be wroken
On him, that falsly hath his fayth broken
And sayd: he and al his kynne at ones
Were worthy to be brent both fel and bones

Now had Calcas lefte in this myschaunce
Unwyst of this falce and wicked dede
A doughter, whiche was in great penaunce
And of her lyfe she was ful sore in drede
And wyst neuer what best was to rede
And as a wydowe was she, and al alone
And nyst to whō she might make her mone

Creseyde was this ladyes name aright
As to my doome, in al Troyes cyte
Nought fayrer lady, for passynge euery wight
So angelyke whose her natiue beaute
That no mortal thynge semed she
And therwith was she so parfite a creature
As she had be made in scornynge of nature

This lady, that al day herde at eare
Her fathers shame falsed, and trayson
Ful nygh out of her wyt for sorow & feare
In wydowes habite large of launtre brode
Before Priamo: on knees she fel adoun
His mercy bad, her selfe excusyng
With pytous voice, and tenderly weepyng

Now was this Priamo prince of nature
And sawe that she was sorowful begone
And that she was so fayre a creature
Of his goodnesse he gladed her anone
And bad she let your fathers trayson gone
Forth with myschaunce, & ye your selfe in ioye
To dwellen with vs, while you lyst in Troye

And at þ honour, þ men may do you haue
As forforth as thou your father dyscrie
Ye shul haue, and your body shul ryght saue
As fer as I may ought enquyre and here
And she him thanked with ful humble chere
And ofert worde and it had ben his wyl
To bide her ther, where home and bide her shul

And in her house she abode with such myrthe
As yl her honour nede was to holde
And whyle she was dwellyng in that cyte
She kept her estate, & of yonge and olde
Ful well beloued, and wel men of her tolde
But whether that she children had or none
I rede it nat, therfore I let it gone

The thynges fellen as they don of werre
Betwixen hem of Troye and Grekes ofte
For some day boughte they of Troye it derre

And

And eke the grekes founden nothyng soft
The folke of Troye: a thus fortune aloft
And vnder eke gan hem to whelmen bothe
After her course, aye whyle þ they wer wroth

But howe this towne came to distruccion
Me lusteth not to purpose me to tel
For it were a longe digression
fro my matter, and you to longe to dwel
But the Troyan testes, as they fel
In Dares, or in Dyte
Who so þ can, may reden hem as they write.

But though the grekes hem of Troy shetten
And her ost besieged al aboute
Her olde vsages nolde they not letten
As to honouren her goddes ful deuoute
But alder most in honour out of doute
They had a relyke hyght Palladyon
That was her trust aboum euerychon

And so befel, whan comen was the tyme
Of April, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty vert the pryme
And swote smellyng floures white and rede
In sondry wise shewed as I rede
The folke of Troy, her obseruaunces olde
Palladions fest went for to holde

Vnto the temple in al their best wyse
Generally there went many a wyght
To herken of Palladions seruyse
And namely many a lusty knyght
And many a lady fresh, and mayden bryght
Ful wel arayde bothe moste and leest
Redy for the festa on and the hye feest

Among these other folke was Creseyda
In widowes habite blacke but nathelesse
Right as our first letter is now an a
In beaute first, so stode she makeles
Her goodly lokyng gladded al the prees
Nas neuer yet seyn thyng to be preysed so derre
Nor vnder cloude blake so bright a sterre

As was Creseyde, they sayden euerychone
That her beheelde in her blake wede
And yet she stode ful lowe and stil alone
Behynde other folke in litel stede
And nyr the doze vnder shames drede
Symple of atyre, and debonayre of chere
With ful assured lokyng and manere

This Troylus as he was wont to gyde
His yonge knyghtes ladde hem vp and downe
In thilke large temple on euery syde
Beholdyng aye the ladies of the towne
Now here now there, for no deuocyowne
Had he to none, to rouen hym his rest
But gan to prayse and lacke whom he lest

And in his walke ful faste he gan to wayten
If knyght or squier of his company
Gan for to syke, or lete his eyen baiten
On any woman, that he coude espye
He wolde synyle and holde it a folye
And say hem thus: O lorde be sleeth so fyre
For loue of the, whan I thou rumest ful shyre

I haue her de tel parfourme your lyuyng
Ye louers, a the youre leude obseruaunces
And whiche a labour folke haue in wynnyng
Of loue, and in keping suche dourraunces
And whan your play is lost, wo a penaunces
O, very fooles, blynde and nyce be ye
Ther is not one can ware by another be

And with þ wolde he gan raste by the bridle
Alcaunces lo, is this not wel ysayd
As whyche the god of Loue gan lokyn rowne
Right for despyte, and hope him to be payed
Be hydde amone his bowe was not broken
For sobrenly he hitte hem al the ful
And yet as proude a pecocke gan he pul

O blinde worlde, o blinde entencion
How often fallith al the fest contrarye
Of surquedrie and foule presumpcyon
For caught is proude, and caught is debonayre
Thus Troylus is clomben on the stayre
And litel weneth, that he moste descenden
But al day fayleth that fooles wenden

As proude bere ard begynneth for to skippe
Out of the way, so pricketh him his corne
Til he a lasshe haue of the longe whippe
Than thinketh he, thogh I praise al beforne
First in the route, ful farre a mong yborne
Yet am I but an horse, and horses lawe
I must endure, and with my fetres drawe

So fared it by this fiers and proude knyght
Though he a worthy knyges corne were
And wende nothyng had had suche myght
Auenst his wyl, that shulde his herte stere
Yet with a loke his herte wore on fyre

That he ꝑ nowe was moste in pride aboue
Wose sodaynly moste subiecte vnto loue

For thyensample taketh of this man
Ye wyse,proude, and worthy folkes al
To scornen loue,whiche that so sone can
The fredome of your hertes to hym thral
For euer it was,and euer it be shal
That loue is he that al thyng may bynde
For no man may fordo the lawe of kynde

That this be sothe,hath preued and doth yet
For this(trowe I) ye knowe al and some
Men reden nat that folke han greater wit
Than they, ꝑ han ben most with loue ynome
And strengest folke ben therwith ouercome
The worthyest and greatest of degre
This was and is,and yet men shal it se

And trueliche that sitte wel to be so
For alderwisest han therwith ben plesed
And they that han ben aldermoste in wo
With loue, han ben comforted most and esed
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed
And worthy folke made worthyer of name
And causeth most to dreden vyce and shame

Nowe syth it may nat goodly be withstonde
And is a thyng so vertuous in kynde
Refuseth nought to loue,for to ben bonde
Sithe as hym selfen lyst he may you bynde
The yerde is bette that bowen wol a wynde
Than that that brest,a therfore I you rede
Nowe folowerth him,ꝑ so wel can you lede

But for to tellen forthe in specyall
As of this kynges sonne, of which I tolde
And leuen other thyng collaterall
Of him thinke I,my tale forthe to holde
Bothe of his ioye, and of his cares colde
And his werke,as touchyng this matere
For I it gan, I wol therto refere

Within the temple he went hym forth playeng
This Troylus,of euery wight aboute
On this lady,and nowe on that lokyng
Where so she were of towne,or of without
And vpon cas befyl,that through a route
His eye perced,and so depe it went
Tyl on Creseyde it smote, and there it stent

And sodaynly for wonder wex astoned
And gan her bet beholde in thrifty wyse
O dere god thought he, where hast ꝑ wonned
That art so fayre,and goodly to deuyse
Therwith his herte gan to sprede and ryse
And softe sighed,lest men might him here
And caught ayen his first playeng chere

She nas nat with the moste of her stature
But al her lymmes so wel answering
Were to womanhode,that creature
Was neuer lasse mannisshe in semyng
And eke the pure wise of her meanyng
Shewed wel,that men might in her gesse
Honour,estate, and womanly noblesse

Tho Troylus, right wonder wel withall
Gan for to lyke her meanynge and her chere
Which somdele deignous was,for she let fal
Her loke alytel a syde, in suche manere
Ascaunces,what may I nat stonden here
And after that,her lokyng gan she lyght
That neuer thought hi sene so good a sight

And of her loke in him there gan to quiken
So great delyte,and suche affection
That in his hertes bottom gan to sticken
Of her his fire,and depe impression
And though he erst had poied vp and down
Than was he glad his hornes in to shrinke
Unnethes wist he howe to loke or wynke

Lo,he that lete him selfen so conneng
And scorned hem that loues paynes dyen
Was ful vnware that loue had his dwelling
Within the subtel stremes of her eyen
That sodaynly him thought he felte dyen
Right with her loke,the spirite in his herte
Blessed be loue,ꝑ thus can folke conuerte

She this in blacke, lykynge to Troylus
Ouer al thyng he stode for to beholde
But his desire, ne wherfore he stode thus
He neither chere made,ne worde tolde
But from a ferre,his maner for to holde
On other thyng somtyme his loke he caste
And ofte on her,whyle that the seruyce laste

And after this,nat fullyche al a whaped
Out of the temple eselyche he wente
Repentyng him that he euer had yaped
Of loues folke,lest fully the discente
Of scorne fyl on hym self, but what he mente
Lest it were wyste on any maner syde
His wo he gan dissimulen and hyde

Whan

Whā he was fro this temple thus departed
He streyght anone vnto his palays turneth
Right with her loke, thrōugh thorē ✠ darted
Al fayneth he in lūste that he sotourneth
And al his chere ✠ speche also he burneth
And aye of loues seruauntes euery whyle
Him selfe to wrye, at hem he gan to smyle

And sayd lorde, so they lyue al in lust
Ye louers, for the commyngest of you
That serueth moste ententifelliche and best
Him lyst as often harme therof as prowe
Your hyre is quite ayen, ye god wote howe
Not wel for wel, but shorne for good seruise
In fayth the your order is reuled in good wise

In no certayne ben your obseruaunces
But it a sely fewe poyntes be
Ne nothing asketh so great attendaūces
As dothe your laye, and that knowe al ye
But that is not the worst, as mote I the
But tolde I you the worste poynt, I leue
Al sayde I sothe, ye wolden at me greue

But take this, that ye louers ofte eschewe
Or els done of good entencyon
Ful ofte thy lady wol it misse construwe
And deme it harme in her opinion
And yet if she for other encheson
Be wroth, thē shalt thou haue a groin anone
Lorde, wel is him that may bene of you one

But for al this, whan that he seeth his tyme
He held his pees, non other bote him gayned
For loue began his fethers so to lyme
That wel vneth vnto his folke he fayned
That other besy nedes hym distrayned
So wo was hym, that what to done he nist
But bad his folke to gone where as hem list

And whan that he in chambre was alone
He downe on his beddes fete him sette
And firste he gan to sike, and efte to grone
And thought aye on her so withouten lette
That as he satte and woke, his spirite mette
That he her saugh, and temple, ✠ al the wise
Right of her loke, and gan it newe auyse

Thus gan he make a mystorie of his minde
In whiche he saugh al holly her figure
And that he wel coude in his hert finde
It was to him a right good auenture
To loue suche one, and if he did his cure
To serue her, yet might he fal in grace
Or els, for one of her seruauntes pace

Imagining, that trauayle nor grame
Ne might, for so goodly one be lorne
As she, ne hym for his desire no shame
Al were it wist, but in prise and vp borne
Of al louers, wel more than beforne
This argumented he, in his gr[illegible]ng
Ful vnauysed of his wo commyng

Thus toke he purpose loues craft to sewe
And thought he wolde werken priuely
First to hyde his desire in mone
From euery wight yborne, al outerly
But he might ought recouered ben therby
Remembring him, that loue to wode to late
Yeleth bitter frute, though sweete to be to taste

And euer al this, ful in thel more he thought
What for to speke, and what to holden hyde
And what to arten, her to loue he sought
And on a songe anone right to begynne
And gan loude on his fortune for to wayle
For with good hope, he gan fully affirme
Creseyde for to loue, and nought to repente

And of his songe not onely his sentence
As write myn auctour called Lollius
But playnely saue our tonges difference
I dare wel say, in al that Troylus
Sayed in his songe, lo euery worde right thus
As I shal seyne, and who so list it here
Lo nere this verse, he may it fynde ywrite

¶ The songe of Troylus

¶ If no loue is, o god what feele I so
And if loue is, what thing ✠ whiche is he
If loue be good, fro whence cometh my wo
If it be wicke, a wonder thinketh me
Whan euery torment and aduersyte
That cometh of him, may to me sauery thinke
For ay the mo I drinke the more I longe

And if that at myn owne luste I brenne
Fro whēce cometh my wayling ✠ my playnte
If harme agree me, wherto playne I thenne
I not, ne why, vnwery that I feynte
O quicke deth, o swete harme so queynte
How may of the in me, be suche quantyte
But if that I consente that it so be

And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Complayne ywis, thus possed to and fro

All

Al sterelesse within a bote am I
I mydde the see, atwixen wyndes two
That in contrarye stonden euer mo
Alas, what is this wonder maladye
For heate of colde, for colde of heate I dye

And to the god of loue thus sayde he
With pytous voyce, O lorde now yours is
My spirite, whiche that ought yours be
Yow thóke I lord, ỳ han me brought to this
But whether goddesse or woman ywis
She be, I not whiche, that ye do me serue
But as her man I wol aye lyue and sterue

Ye stonden in her eyen mightely
As in a place to your vertue digne
Wherfore lorde, if my seruyce or I
May lyken you, so bethe to me benigne
For myn estate royal here I resigne
Into her honde, and with ful humble chere
Become her man, as to my lady dere

In him ne deigned sparen blode royall
The fire of loue, wherefro god me bleste
Ne hym forbare in no degre for all
His vertue or his excellent prowesse
But helde hym as his thrall lowe in distresse
And brende hym so in sondrie wyse aye newe
That sixty tymes a day he loste his hewe

So muchell day fro day his owne thought
For lust to her, gan quicken and encrease
That euery che other charge he sette at nought
For thy ful ofte, his hotte fyre to cease
To sene her goodly loke he gan to prease
For therby to ben eased wel he wende
And aye the nere he was, the more he brende

For aye the nere the fyre the hotter is
This trowe I knowen al this company
But were he fette or nere, I dare say this
By myght or daye, for wisdome or folye
His herte, whiche that is his brestes eye
Was aye on her, that fayrer was to sene
Than euer was Helayn, or Polixene

Eke of the day there passed nat an houre
That to him selfe a thousande tyme he seyde
God goodly, to whom I serue and laboure
As I best can, now wolde god Creseyde
Ye wolden on me rewe, er that I deyde
My dere herte alas, myn herte and hewe
And life is loste, but ye wol on me rewe

Al other dredes weren from hym fledde
Bothe of thassiege, and his saluacion
Ne in desyre non other fownes bredde
But arguementes to hys conclusyon
That she on hym wolde han compassion
And he to ben her man, whyle he may dure
Lo here his lyfe, and fró his dethe his cure

The sharpe shoures fel, of armes preue
That Hector or his other brethren dydden
Ne made hym only therfore ones mene
And yet was he, wher so men went or ridden
Foúde one the beste, and lengest tyme abiden
There peril was, and eke did suche trauayle
In armes, that to thynke it was meruayle

But for none hate he to the grekes had
Ne also for the rescous of the toun
Ne made him thus in armes for to mad
But onely lo, for this conclusioun
To lyken her the bet for his renoun
Fro day to day in armes so he spedde
That the grekes as the dethe hym dredde

And fro this forth tho reft him loue his slepe
And made his meate his foe, and eke his sorow
Gan multyplye, that who so toke kepe
It shewed in his hewe both eué and morow
Therfore a tyrle he gan hym for to borowe
Of other sickenesse, lest men of him wende
That the hotte fyre of loue hym brende

And sayde he had a feuer, and fared amys
But were it certayne I can nat say
If that his lady vnderstode nat thys
Or fayned her she nyst, one of the twey
But wel rede I, that by no maner wey
Ne semed it that she on hym rought
Or of his payne, what so euer he thought

But than felte thys Troylus suche wo
That he was welnigh wod, for aye his drede
Was this, that she some wight loued so
That neuer of hym she wolde han takē hede
For whiche hym thought he felte hert blede
Ne of his wo ne durst he nought begynne
To tellen her, for al this worlde to wynne

But whan he had a space from his care
Thus to him selfe ful ofte he gan to playne
He sayde, o foole now art thou in the snare
That whilom lapedest at loues payne
Now art ỳ hent, now gnaw thin owen chayn

Thou

Thou were aye woned eche louer repreue
Of thing fro whiche thou canst nat ꝑ defende

What woll nowe euery louer sayne of the
If thys be wyste, but euer in thyn absence
Laughen in scorne, and sayne lo ther goth he
That is the man of great sapience
That helde vs louers lesse in reuerence
Now thanked be god, he may gon on ꝑ daunce
Of hem that loue lyste fresly auaunce

But o thou woful Troylus, god wolde
Sythe thou must louen, throughe thy destine
That thou beset were on such one, ꝑ sholde
Knowe al thy wo, al lacked her pyte
But also colde in loue towardes the
Thy lady is, as frost in wynter moone
And thou forbo, as snowe in fire is soone

God wolde I were aryued in the porte
Of dethe, to whiche my sorowe wol me lede
In lorde, to me it were a great comforte
Than were I quite of languysshing in drede
For by my hyd sorowe yblowe in brede
I shal beraped ben a thousande tyme
More than ꝑ foole, of whose folye men tyme

But now helpe god, and ye swete, for whom
I playne, prought ye neuer wight so sore
O mercy dere herte, and helpe me from
The deth, for I, while that my life may laste
More thā my selfe woll loue you to my laste
And with some frēdly loke gladethme swete
Though neuer more thyng ye me byhete

¶ These wordes, and full many an other mo
He spake, and called euer in hys compleynte
Her name, for to tellen her hys wo
Cynighe that he in salte teres dreynte
It was for nought, she herd nat his pleynte
And whan that he bethought on that folye
Thousande folde his wo gan multyplye

Bewaylyng in hys chambre thus alone
A frende of hys, that called was Pandare
Came ones in vnware, and herde him grone
And sawe his frēde in suche distresse & care
Alas (qd he) who causeth al thys care
O mercy god, what vnhap may thys mene
Haunowe thus sone grekes made you lene

Or haste thou some remorse of conscience
And arte nowe sal in some dreuesyon
And wayleſt for thy synne and thyn offence
And haste for ferde cought contrycion
God saue hem, that besieged han our toun
That so can lay our folke on presse
And bring our lusty folke to holynesse

These wordes sayde he for the nones all
That ꝑ such thig he myst him angry maken
And with his anger don his sorowe fall
As for a tyme, and his corage awaken
But wel wyste he, as ferre as tonges speken
There nas a man of greater hardynesse
Than he, ne more desyred worthynesse

¶ What cas qd Troylus or what auenture
Hath gyded the to seke me langurysshyng
That am refuse of euery creature
But for the loue of god, at my praying
Go hence away, for certis my beyng
Wol the disese, and I more nedes dey
Therfore go way, there nys no more to sey

But if thou wene I be thus sicke for drede
It is nat so, and therfore seme nought
There is an other thyng I take of hede
Wel more thē ought ꝑ grekes ben yet wrought
Which cause is of my deth for sorow & thought
But though that I nowe tel it the me lesse
Be thou nat wrothe, I hyde it for the best

This Pādare, ꝑ nigh malte for wo & routhe
Ful often sayde alas, what may this be
Nowe frende qd he if euer loue ai trouthe
Hath ben er this betwixen the and me
Ne do thou neuer suche a enuie
That hyden fro thy frende so great a care
Wostē thou not wel that I am Pandare

I wol parten with the al thy payne
If it so be I do the no comforte
As it is frendes right, soothe for to sayne
To euerparten wo, as glad disporte
I haue and shal, for trewe or falce reporte
In wronge and right ꝑ loued the al my lyue
Hyde not thy wo fro me, but tel it blyue

Than gan this sorowful Troylus to syke
And sayde him thus, God leue it be my best
To tellen the, for sythe it may the lyke
Yet wol I tel it, though my hert breste
And wel wote I, thou makst do me no reste
But tell thou deme I trust nat to the
Nowe herke frend, for thus it stant with me

Loue

Loue, ayenst the whiche who so defenderth
Hym selven mosse, hym alderlest auayleth
With dispeyre so sorowfully me offenderth
That stright vnto the derth min herte sayleth
Therto desyre, so brennyngly me assayleth
That to ben slayne it were a greater ioye
To me, thá kyng of Grece be and of Troye

Suffiseth thys, my ful frende Pandare
That I haue sayd, for now woteste þ my wo
And for the loue of god my colde care
So hyde it wel, I tolde it neuer to mo
For barnes mighten folowen mo than two
If it were wyst, but be thou in gladnesse
And let me serue vnknowe of my distresse

Nowe hast thou thus vnkyndely a longe
Hid this fro me, thou foole (qõ Pandarus)
Paraventure þ mayst after suche one longe
That myn auyse anon may helpen vs
This were a wonder thinge (qõ Troylus)
Thou couldest neuer in loue thy selfen wysse
Howe dyuel mayst þ hungren me to blisse

(Ye Troylus, nowe herke (qõ Pandare)
Though I be nyce, it happeth often so
That one that ares do the ful yuel fare
By good counsaile can kepe his frende therfro
I haue my selfe seyne a blynde man go
There as he fel, that couthe lokin wyde
A foole may eke a wyse man ofte gyde

Counsell is no werrynge instrument
But yet it maketh sharpe werrynge tools
And ther thou wost þ I haue aught mistwent
Eschue thou þ, for suche thing to schole is
Thus often wise men ben waren by fooles
If thou so do, thy wyt is well bewared
By his contrary is euery thyng declared

For how mist euer swetnesse haue be knowe
To him, that neuer tasted bytternesse
No man wot what gladnesse is I trowe
That neuer was in sorowe, or some distresse
Eke white by blacke, by shame eke worthy-
Ech set by other, more for other semeth nesse
As men may seme, and so the wyse it demeth

Sythe thus of two contraryes is o loze
I that haue in loue so ofte assayed
Greuaunces, ought connen wel the more
Counsaylen the, of that thou art dismayde
And eke the ne ought not ben euyl apayde
Though I desire with the for to bere
Thyn hevy charge, it shal the lasse dere

I wote wel that it fared thus by me
As to thy brother Paris, an hyerdesse
Which that cleped was Oenone
Wrote in a complaynte of her heuynesse
Ye sawe the letter that she wrote, I gesse
Nay neuer yet ywis (qõ Troylus)
Nowe (qõ Pandare) herkeneth it was thus

Phebus, that first fonde art of medycyne
(Qõ she) and conde in euery wightes care
Remedy and rede, by herbes he knewe fyne
Yet to him selfe his conning was ful bare
For loue had hym so bounden in a snare
Al for the doughter of kyng Idomete
That al his crafte ne coude his sorowe bete

Right so fare I, vnhappy for me
I loue one best, and that me smerteth sore
And yet paraventure I can rede the
And not my selfe, repreue me no more
I haue no cause I wot wel for to sore
As doth an hauke, that lyst to play
But to thyn helpe, yet somwhat can I say

And of o thyng, right syker mayste thou be
That certayne, for to deyen in the payne
That I shal neuer mo discouer the
Ne by my trouth, I kepe not trespasse
The fro thy loue, although it were hetyre
That is thy brothers wyfe, vf yelde it wyfe
Be what she be, and loue her as thy lyfe

Therfore, as frendfully the in me affyre
And tel me plaine, what is thyn encheson
And fynal cause of wo, that ye endure
For doutelesse nothyng, myn entencyon
Ne is not to you of reprehencyon
To speke as nowe, for no wight may bysyne
A man to loue, tyl that hym lyke to leue

And wetest well, that bothe two ben vices
Mystrusten al, or elis al leue
But wel I wote, the meane of it no vice is
As for to trusten some wyght is a preue
Of trouth, and for thy wolde I fayn reuene
Thy wroge cõceyte, and do the some wyt trust
Thy wo to tel, and tel me if the lust

The wise eke sayth, wo hym that is alone
For and he fal, he hath none helpe to ryse

And

And ſithe thou haſt a felowe, tel thy mone
For this nys nought certayne the next wyſe
To wynnen loue, as techen vs the wiſe
To walowe and wepe, as Niobe the quene
Whoſe teres yet in marble bene yſene

Let be thy wepyng, and thy dreryneſſe
And let vs iyſſen wo, with other ſpeche
So may thy woful tyme ſcine leſſe
Delyte nought in wo, thy wo to leche
As done theſe fooles, that her ſorowes eche
With ſorow, whan they han miſauenture
And iuſten nought to ſechen other cure

Wen ſayne to wretche is conſolacion
To haue another felowe in his payne
That ought wel ben our opinyon
For bothe thou and I of loue playne
So ful of ſorowe am I, ſothe to ſayne
That certaynly, no more hardc grace
May ſyt on me, for why there is no ſpace

Yf god wol, thou art nought agaſt of me
Tel I wold of thy lady the begyle
Thou woſt thy ſelfe, who that I loue parde
As I beſt can, gon ſythen longe whyle
And ſythen thou woll, I do it for no wyle
And ſithe I am he, that thou truſteſt moſt
Tel me ſomwhat, ſens al my wo thou woſte

Yet Troylus, for al this no worde ſayde
But longe he lay ſtyl, as he deed were
And after this, with ſyhyng he abrayde
And to Pandarus voice he lent his ere
And vp his eyen caſt he, and than in frere
Was Pandarus, leſte that in frenſye
He ſhulde fal, or elis ſone deye

And ſaid awake, ful wonderlyche & ſharpe
What ſlombreſt thou, as in a lytargye
Quat thou lyke an aſſe to the harpe
That betteth ſoun, whan men ſtringes plye
But in his minde, of that no melodye
May ſynke him to gladen, for that he
So dull is, in his beſtialyte

And with this, Pandare of his wordes ſtent
But Troylus to him no thyng anſwerde
For why, to tel was nought his entent
Neuer to no man, for whom that he ſo ferde
For it is ſayd, men maken ofte a yerde
Wyth which the maker is him ſelfe ybeten
In ſondrie maner, as theſe wiſe treten

And namelyche in his counſayle tellyng
That toucheth loue, that oughte ben ſecre
For of him ſelfe it woll ynough out ſpryng
But if that it the bet gouerned be
Eke ſometyme it is craftc to ſeme flee
For thing, whiche in effecte men hunten faſte
Al this gan Troylus in his harte caſte

But natheleſſe, whan he had herde him crye
Awake he gan, and ſyke wonder ſore
And ſaid frende, though that I ſtyll lye
I nam not deefe, nowe peace & crie no more
For I haue herde thy wordes, and thy lore
But ſuffer me my fortune to bewayten
For thy prouerbes may nought me auayten

For other cure canſte thou none for me
Eke I nyll not ben cured, I woll dye
Ne wot knowe I of the quene Niobe
Ne eke of thyne olde enſamples, I the pry
Quod frende qd Pandarus therfore I cry
Suche is delyte of fooles to bewepe
Her wo, but ſeken boote they ne kepe

Nowe know I that reſon in the faileth
But tell me, if I wyſte what the were
For whome that the al miſauenture aſſayleth
Durſte thou that I tolde it in her ere
Thy wo, ſith thou darſt not thy ſelfe for fere
And her beſought, on the to han ſome rowthe
Ne by nay, qd he by god and by my trouthe

What, not as beſtly, qd Pandarus?
As though myne owne lyfe lay in this nede
Why no parde ſir, quod this Troylus
And why for that thou ſhuldeſt neuer drede
Woſt thou that wel, ye that is out of drede
Qd Troylus for al that euer ye conne
Ne wote no ſuche wyrche as I be wonne

Qd Pandarus alas what may this be
That thou diſpayred art, thus cauſeleſſe
Whar lyeth nat thy lady, benedicite
Nowe woll thou ſo, that thou art gracieleſſe
Suche wel is not alwaye bottleſſe
Why put not impoſſyble thus thy cure
Sythe thyng to come is ofte in auenture

I graunt wel that thou endureſt wo
As ſharpe as doth he Tesiphus in hell
Whoſe stomake foules eyten euer mo
That hyghten vultures, as bokes tell
But I may not endure that thou dwell

Loue, ayenst the whiche who so defendeth
Hym selven moste, hym alderlest auayleth
With dispeyre so sorowfully me offendeth
That streight vnto the deth min herte saylleth
Therto desyre, so brennyngly me assayleth
That to ben slayne it were a greater ioye
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Suffiseth thys, my ful frende Pandare
That I haue sayd, for now woteſt þ my wo
And for the loue of god my colde care
So hyde it wel, I tolde it neuer to mo
For harmes mighten folowen mo than two
If it were wyst, but be thou in gladnesse
And let me serue vnknowe of my distresse

Howe hast thou thus vnkyndly a longe
Hid this fro me, thou foole (qõ Pandarus)
Parauenture þ mayst after suche one longe
That myn auyse anon may helpen vs
This were a wonder thinge (qõ Troylus)
Thou couldrst neuer in loue thy selfen wysse
How dyuel mayst þ bringen me to blisse

Ye Troylus, nowe herke (qõ Pandare)
Though I be nyce, it happeth often so
That one that ares dothe ful yuel fare
By good coũsaile can kepe his frende therfro
I haue my selfe seyne a blynde man go
There as he fel, that couldе loken wyde
A foole may eke a wyse man ofte gyde

A whetstone is no keruynge instrument
But yet it maketh sharpe keruyng tolis
And ther thou woſt þ I haue aught mistwent
Eschue thou þ, for suche thing to schole is
Thus often wise men ben waren by foolis
If thou so do, thy wyt is well bewared
By this contrary is euery thyng declared

For how mizt euer swetnesse haue be knowe
To him, that neuer tasted bytternesse
No man wot what gladnesse is I trowe
That neuer was in sorowe, or some distresse
Eke white by blacke, by shame eke worthy
Ech set by other, more for other semeth nesse
As men may sene, and so the wyse it demeth

Lythe thus of two contrarye is o lore
I that haue in loue so ofte assayed
Grenaunces, ought connen wel the more
Counsaylen the, of that thou art disnayde
And eke the ne ought not ben euyl apayde
Though I desire with the for to dere
Thyn hevy charge, it shal the lasse dere

I wote wel that it fared thus by me
As to thy brother Paris, an hyerdesse
Whiche that cleped was Oenone
Wrote in a complaynte of her heuynesse
Ye sawe the letter that she wrote, I gesse
Nay neuer yet ywis (qõ Troylus)
Nowe (qõ Pandare) herkeneth it was thus

Phebus, that first fonde art of medycyne
(Qõ she) and coude in euery wightes care
Remedy and rede, by herbes he knewe fyne
Yet to him selfe hys conning was ful bare
For loue had hym so bounden in a snare
Al for the doughter of kynge Admete
That al hys crafte ne coude his sorowe bete

Right so fare I, vnhappy for me
I loue one best, and that me smerteth sore
And yet parauenture I can reden the
And nat my selfe, repreue me no more
I haue no cause I wot wel for to sore
As doth an hauke, that lyſteth for to play
But to thyn helpe, yet somwhat can I say

And of o thyng, right syker mayste thou be
That certayne, for to dyen in the payne
That I shal neuer mo discouer the
Ne by my trouth, I kepe nat constreyne
The fro thy loue, although it were heleyne
That is thy brothers wyfe, yf yche it wyſte
Be what she be, and loue her as the lyſt

Therfore, as frendfullyche in me assure
And tel me plaine, what is thyn encheson
And fynal cause of wo, that ye endure
For douteth nothyng, myn entencyon
Nas not to you of reprehensyon
To speke as nowe, for no wight may byreue
A man to loue, tyl that hym lyſte to leue

And weteth well, that bothe two ben vices
Mystrusten al, or els al leue
But wel I wote, the meane ofte no vice is
As for to trusten some wyght is a preue
Of trouth, and for thy wolde I fayn remeue
Thy wrõge cõceyte, and do the some wyst trust
Thy wo to tel, and tel me if the lust

The wise eke sayth, wo hym that is alone
For and he fal, he hath none helpe to ryse

And

And sithe thou hast a felowe, tel thy mone
For this nys nought certayne the next wyse
To wymmen loue, as techen vs the wise
To walowe and wepe, as Niobe the quene
Whose teres yet in marble bene yseue

Let be thy wepyng, and thy dreryneſſe
And let vs lyſſen wo, with other ſpeche
So may thy woful tyme ſeme leſſe
Delyte nought in wo, thy wo to ſeche
As done theſe fooles, that her ſorowes eche
With ſorow, whan they han miſaeuenture
And liſten nought to ſechen other cure

Men ſayne to wretche is conſolacion
To haue another felowe in his payne
That ought wel ben our opinyon
For bothe thou and I of loue playne
So ful of ſorowe am I, ſothe to ſayne
That certaynly, no more hatde grace
May ſyt on me, for why there is no ſpace

Yf god wol, thou art nought agaſt of me
Leſt I wold of thy lady the begyle
Thou woſt thy ſelfe, who that I loue parde
As I beſt can, gon ſythen longe whyle
And ſythen thou woſt, I do it for no wyle
And ſithe I am he, that thou truſteth moſt
Tel me ſomwhat, ſens al my wo thou woſte

Yet Troylus, for al this no worde ſayde
But longe he lay ſtyl, as he deed were
And after this, with ſykyng he abrayde
And to Pandarus voice he lent his eere
And vp his eyen caſt he, and than in feere
Was Pandarus, leſte that in frenſeye
He ſhulde fal, or els ſone deye

And ſaid awake, ful wonderlyche & ſharpe
What ſlombreſt thou, as in a lytargye
Art thou lyke an aſſe to the harpe
That bereth ſoun, whan men ꝑ ſtringes plye
But in his minde, of that no melodye
May ſynke him to gladen, for that he
So dull is, in his beſtialyte

And with this, Pandare of his wordes ſtent
But Troylus to him no thyng anſwerde
For why, to tel was nought his entent
Neuer to no man, for whom that he ſo ferde
For it is ſayd, men maken ofte a yerde
With which the maker is him ſelfe ybeten
In ſondrie maner, as theſe wiſe treten

And namelyche in his counſayle tellyng
That toucheth loue, that ought ben ſecre
For of him ſelfe it woll ynough out ſpryng
But if that it the bet gouerned be
Eke ſometyme it is crafte to ſeme ſlee
For thing, whiche in effecte men hunten faſte
Al this gan Troylus in his harte caſte

But natheleſſe, whan he had herde him crye
Awake he gan, and ſyke wonder ſore
And ſaid frende, though that I ſtyll lye
I nam not deefe, nowe peace & crie no more
For I haue herde thy wordes, and thy lore
But ſuffer me my fortune to bewaylen
For thy prouerbes may nought me auayle

Nor other cure canſte thou none for me
Eke I nyll not ben cured, I woll dye
What knowe I of the quene Niobe
Let be thyne olde enſamples, I the prey
Nay frende (quod Pandarus) therfore I ſey
Suche is delite of fooles to be wepe
Her wo, but ſeken boote they ne kepe

Nowe knowe I that reſon in the farleth
But tell me, if I wiſte what ſhe were
For whome that the al miſaeuenture aſterth
Durſte thou that I tolde it in her eere
Thy wo, ſith thou darſt not thy ſelfe for feere
And her beſought, on the to han ſome rowthe
Why nay (quod he) by god and by my trouthe

What, not as beſily (quod Pandarus)
As though myne owne lyfe lay in this nede
Why no parde ſir (quod this Troylus)
And why, for that thou ſhuldeſt neuer ſpede
Woſt thou that wel, ye that is out of drede
(Quod Troylus) for al that euer ye conne
She wolde no ſuche wretche as I be wonne

(Quod Pandarus) alas what may this be
That thou diſpaired art, thus cauſeleſſe
What, lyueth nat thy lady, benedicite
Nowe woſt thou ſo, that thou art graceleſſe
Suche vnel is not alwaye botteleſſe
Why put not impoſſyble thus thy cure
Sythe thyng to come is ofte in aduenture

I graunt wel that thou endureſt wo
As ſharpe as doth he Teſiphus in hell
Whoſe ſtomake foules eyten euer mo
That hyghten vultures, as bokes tell
But I may not endure that thou dwell

In so beschyful an opinion
That of thy wo nis no curacyon

But ones nyl thou, for thy cowarde herte
And for thyne ire, and folyssche wylfulnesse
For wantrust tellen of thy sorowes smerte
Ne to thyne owne helpe, do besynesse
As moche as spoke a worde, ye more or lesse
But lyest as he that of lyfe nothyng recche
What woman coude love suche a wrecche

What may the demen other of thy dethe
Yf thou thus dye, and she not why it is
But that for fraat, is yolden up thy brethe
For grykes han besieged bs yuis
Lorde which a thank shalt ? haue chil of this
Thus wol she sayne, & al the towne arowes
The wrecche is dead, ? dyuel haue his bowes

Thou mayst alone here wepe, crye, & knele
But love a woman that she wore is nought
And she wol quyte it ther thou shalt not fele
Unkyndnesse vnkyst, and lost that is besought
What many a man hath love ful dere abought
Twenty twynne that his lady ne wylle
That nought yet his ladyes mowthe he kyste

What, shulde he therfore fallen in despayre
Or be cetraunce for his owne vyce
Or slaven him self, al be his lady fayre
Nay nay: but euer in one be stedfast & grene
To serne and love, his herte hertes quene
And thynke it is a guerdone her to serue
A thousande parte more, than he can deserue

And of that worde toke hede Troylus
And thought anone, what sorte he was in
And bowe that sothe him sayde Pandarus
That for to sleen him self, might be not wyn
But bothe done vnmanhode and a syn
And of his dethe his lady nought to wyte
For of his wo, god wot she knewe ful lyte

And with ? thought, he gan ful sore syke
And sayd, Alas: what is me best to do
To whom Pandare sayd, ? the lyke
The best is, that thou tel me thy wo
And haue my trouth, but if thou fynde it so
I be thy bote, or it be ful longe
To peces do me drawe, and sythen honge

Ye, so sayst thou (qd Troylus) alas
But god wot it is naught the rather so
Ful harde it were to helpen in this caas
For wel fynde I, that fortune is my fo
Ne al the men that ryde ron or go
Nay of her cruel whele the harme withstond
For as her lyst, she playeth with fre & bonde

(Qd Pandarus than blamest thou fortune
For thou art wroth, ye now we at erst I se
Wost thou not well that fortune is comune
To euery maner wight, in some degre
And yet thou hast this comforte, lo parde
That as her love is moten ourgone
So more her sorowes passen euerychone

For if her whele stynt, any thyng to turne
Than ceseth she fortune anone to be
Now sith her whele by no way may sojourne
What wost thou if her mutabylite
Right as thy returne made wel don by the
Or that she be nought ferre fro thyn helpe
Parauenture thou hast cause for to sterue

And therfore wost thou what, I the beseke
Let be thy wo, and sorowing to the grounde
For who so euer haue bealing of his leche
To him bihoueth fyrst be wise his wounde
To Cerberus in helle be I bounde
Werre it for my sustren al thy sorowe
By my wyl she shulde be thyne to morowe

Lorde thy I sey, and tel me whom she is
Anon that I may gon about thy nede
And in whe her aught, for my love tel me this
Than wold I hope rather for to spede
The gan the herte of Troylus to blede
For he was hyt, and wore al red for shame
And qd Pandare here begynneth game

And with that worde he gan him for to shake
And sayde theefe, thou shalt her name tel
But tho gan sely Troylus for to quake
As though men shuld han hewen him in pel
And said alas, of al my wo the well
Than is my swete for callen Criseyde
And wel nygh with that worde for fraat he deide

And whan ? Pandare herd her name nemen
Lorde he was glad, and sayde, frende so dere
Now fare a ryght, for Joues name in heuen
Lone hath befet the wel, be of good chere
For of good name, & wyfehom, and manere
She hath inough, and eke of gentylesse
If she be fayre, thou wost thy selfe I gesse

Pt

Ne neuer fey a moze bountreous
Of her eſtate, ne a gladder me of ſpeche
Frendlyer, ne moze gracious
For to do wel, ne laſſe had nede to ſeche
What for to don, and al this bet to reche
In honour, to as ferre as the may ſtreche
Hynges herre ſemeth by hers a wrecche

And for thy loke of good comforte thou be
For certaynly the firſt poynte is this
That noble corage, and wele of hayne the
Iman to have peace with him ſelfe ywis
Soughteſt thou, for nought but good it is
To louen wel, and in a worthy place
Thy ought not depe it happe, but grace

And alſo thinke and therwith glad the
Ther ſith the lady vertuous is al
So folowerth it, that there is ſome pyte
Amonges al theſe other in general
And for they ſe that thou in ſpecial
Requyre nought, that is ayen her name
For vertue ſtretcheth not him ſelfe to blame

Nat hel is me, that euer I was borne
That thou beſet art in ſo good a place
For by my trouth I love I dorſt ſauf ſwerne
Thy hole loues have not be ſo fayre a grace
And wold I wiſt for I were worſt in chace
How in ſtreme, and for deſpyte hem cal
Fals I dare, lat be of theſe fooles al

Be the eſtem hall thou make thy mery lapes
And ſaid, that loues ſeruauntes euery whore
Of euery, hen bery gobbes apes
And ſome wolde munch het meate a lone
Iaggyng a bobbe, & make hem for to grone
And ſome thou ſayderſt had a blaudie fruyte
And playderſt god, they Quilde neuer neuete

And ſome of hem, take on hem for be colde
Ther than ynough, ſo ſayderſt thou ful ofte
And ſome han ſayned of ernyne and colde
How that they waken, whan they depe ſofte
And thus they wold have ſet hem ſelf a lofte
And narderſe ſe were bolder at the laſt
Thus ſayderſt thou, and ſayderſt ful faſt

Yet ſayderſt thou, that for the moze parte
Theſe louers wolde ſpeke in general
And thoughten it was a ſlyker arte
For ſarlyng for to aſſayen ouer al
How may I tape of the, if that I ſhal
But natheles, though that I ſhalde dey
Thou art none of tho, I dare wel ſey

Now bere thy briefe, and ſay to god of Loue
Thy grace lorde, for none I me repent
Yet I myſpake, for now my ſelfe I loue
Thus ſay with al thyne het in good entent
Quod Troylus ah lorde, I me conſent
And pray to the, my lapes thou forgeue
And I ſhal neuer more whyle I lyue

Thou ſaid wel ad Pandare anone I hope
That thou the goddes wrath haſt al apeſed
And ſithe thou haſt wepyng maad a hope
And ſayd ſuch thing, wherth the god is pleſed
It wold neuer god, but thou were eaſed
And thinke wel be, of whom reſt al thy wo
Here after may thy comforte ben alſo

For thilke grauñe, ſ̄ bereth ſ̄ mochel bitche
Bereth eke thefe bolſome herbes, as ful oft
Next the foule nettle, rough and riche
The toft wereth, ſoote, ſmoth, and ſofte
And nere the paley is the vyll a lofte
And nere the herbe wyght the glade mote be
And alſo love is nere the ſyde of ſorowe

Quod loke that attempte be the bridel
And for the deil are ſlidre to the tyde
Ek ris al our labour is on vbel
For hadſted wel, that wiſely can and be
The bygame and trewe, and are wel bolde
The lady fre, perſeuer in thy ſeruyſe
And al is wel, if thou werke in this wyſe

But be that departed is in euery place
Is no ſubtyle bote, as touren clerkes wryte
What wonder is it ſuche one have no grace
Eke two & thou bow it faſtre of ſome ſemuie
As plante a tree or herbe, as londry wyſe
And on the morowe pul it up as blyue
Ne wonder is, though it may neuer thryue

And ſyth that god of love hath the beſtowed
In place digne vnto thy worthynelle
Be onde fait, for to good porte haſte ſtowed
And of thy ſelfe, for any beſtowe
Hope alway wel, for but if Atropyne
Or ouer haſt our both labour bende
I hope of this to make a good ende

And wold thou wey, I am the laſſe afered
Of this matter, wab my nece trete

For this haue I herde say of wyse lered
Was neuer manor woman yet bepete
That was vnapte to suffre loues here
Celestyal,or els loue of kynde
For thy some grace I hope in her to fynde

And for to speke of her in speciall
Her beaute to bethynken, and her youthe
It syt her nought,to ben celestyall
As yet,though that her lyste bothe a kouthe
And trewly it syt her wel right nouthe
A worthy knyght to louen and cherice
And but she do, I holde it for a vyce

Wherfore I am,and wol be aye redy
To payne me to do you thys seruice
For both you to please,this hope I
Here after,for ye ben bothe wyse
And con it counsayle kepe in suche a wyse
That no man shal the wiser of it be
And so we mayr bene gladed all three

And by my trouth I haue right nowe of the
A good conceit, in my wyt as I gesse
And what it is, I wol now that thou se
I thynke that suche Loue of his goodnesse
Hath the conuerted out of wickednesse
That thou shalte ben the best post I leue
Of al his lay,and most his foes greue

Ensample why,se now these great clerkes
That erren aldermost ayen e lawe
And ben conuerted from her wycked werkes
Throuz grace of god, þ lest hem to vi drawe
Thã arne they folke that hã most god i awe
And strengest faythed ben I understonde
And con an errour alderbest withstonde

Whan Troylus had herde Pandare assented
To ben his helpe,in louyng of Creseyde
Nere of his wo,as who sayth vnturmented
But hotter wext his loue,and than he sayde
With sobre chere,as though his hert playde
Nowe blissful Venus helpe, er that I sterue
Of the Pandare, I mow some thãk deserue

But dere frende, howe shal my wo be lesse
Tyl thys be done,and good eke tell me thys
How wylt thou sayen of me and my dystresse
Lest she be wroth, this prayde I most ywis
Or wol not heren al,how it is
Of this drede I,and eke for the manere
Of the her Eme,she myn o suche thyng here

(Od Pandarus)thou hast a full great care
Lest the choyle may fal out of the moone
Why loyder I hate of the the nice fare
Why,entremete of that thou hast to doone
For goddes loue, I byd the a boone
So let me alone,and it shal be thy best
Why frende(qõ he)than done right as þ lest

But herke Pandare o worde,for I nolde
That thou in me wendest so great folye
That to my lady I desyred shulde
That toucheth harme,or any vylanye
For dredelesse me were leuer dye
Than she of me aught els vnderstood
But that,that might sownen in to good

Tho lough this Pandarus,& anon answerde
And I thy borow,fye no wight doth but so
I raught not though she stoode and herde
How that thou sayest,but farwel I wol go
A dieu,be glad,god spede vs both two
Pryue me this labour,and this busynesse
And of my spede,be thyne al the swynnes

Tho Troylus gan downe on knees to fal
And Pandare in his armes bothe fast
And sayde,now fye on the grekes all
Yet parde,god shal helpen at last
And dredelesse,if that my lyfe may last
And god to forne,so some of hem shall smerte
And yet me athynketh þ this auaunt maistrie

Nowe Pandare, I can no more say
Thou wise,thou wost,thou mayst, & art al
My lyfe,my deth,hole in thyne honde I lay
Helpe me now(qõ he) Yes by my trouth I shal
God yelde the frende,& this in speyal
(Qõ Troylus) that thou me recommaunde
To her that may me to the deth cõmaunde

¶ This Pandarus tho,desyrous to serue
His ful frende,he sayde in this manere
Farwel,& thynke I wol the thanke deserue
Haue here my trouth,& that thou shalt here
And went his way,thinkyng on thys matere
And how he best might besechen her of grace
And fynde a tyme therto,and a place

For euery wight that hath a house to holde
He renneth nat the werke for to begynne
With rakel honde,but he wol byde a stounde
And sende his herres lyne out fro within
Alderfyrst his purpose for to wynne

All

Thus Pandare in his hert thought
And cast his werke, ful wysely er he wrought

But Troylus lay tho no lenger downe
But anon vp on his stede baye
And in the felde he played the lyoun
Wo was that greke, that th him met ỳ daye
And in the towne, his maner tho forthe aye
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace
That eche him loued, that loked in his face

For he became the frendlyest wight
The gentyleſt, and eke the most fre
The thriftyest, and one the best knight
That in his tyme was, or myght be
Ded were his japes and his crueltè
His hygh porte, and his maner straunge
And eche of hem, gan for a vertue chaunge

¶ Now let vs stynt of Troylus a stounde
That fareth lyke a man, that hurt is sore
And is fondele of akyng of his wounde
Plesed well, but helid no dele more
And as an easy patient the lore
Wrte, of him that goth about his cure
And thus he dryueth forth his auenture.

¶ Explicit liber primus.

Ut of these blacke wawes for to save
O wynde, the weder gynneth clere
For in ỳ see, the bote hath such trauayle
Of my conuyng, that vneth I it stere
This see clepe I the tempestous matere
Of disspayre, that Troylus was in
But nowe of hope the kalendes begyn

O lady myne that called art Cleo
Thou be my spede fro this forthe, & my muse
To ryme wel this boke tyl I haue do
Me nedeth here none other art to vse
For why, to euery louer I me excuse
That of no sentement I this endyte
But out of latyn, in my tonge it wryte

Wherfore I nyl haue neither thãke ne blame
Of al this worke, but prayе you mekely
Disblameth me, if any worde be laine
For as myne auctour sayd, so say I
Eke though I speake of loue vnfelyngly
No wonder is, for it no thynge of newe is
A blynde man can not iudgen wel in hewis

I knowe that in forme of speche is chaunge
Within a thousande yere, and wordes tho
That hadde prise, now wonder nyce & straunge
Thynketh hem, and yet they spake hem so
And spedde as wel in loue, as men now do
Eke for to wynnen loue, in sondry ages
In sondry londes, sondry ben vsages

And for thy, if it happe in any wyse
That here be any louer in thys place
That herkeneth, as the story wol deuyse
Howe Troylus came to his ladyes grace
And thynketh, so nolde I not loue purchace
Or wondreth on his spede or his doyng
I not, but it is to me no wondryng

For euery wight, whiche that to Rome went
Halte nat o path, ne alway o manere
Eke in some londe were al the game shent
Yf that men farde in loue, as men don here
As thus, in open doyng or in chere
In visityng, in forme, or lawd our lawes
For thy me sayne, eche coũtre hath his lawes

Eke scarsely ben there in this place thre
That haue in loue lawd lyke, and done in al
For to this purpose thys maye lyken the
And the right nought, yet al is done or thal
Eke some men graue in tre, some in stone wal
As it betyde, but sith I haue begonne
Myne authour shal I folow, as I konne.

¶ Explicit Prohemium.

Now Pay ỳ moder is of monethes glade
That fresshe flours, blewe white, and rede
Ben quycke ayen, ỳ wynter deed made
And full of baume is fletyng euery mede
Whã Phebus doth his bright beames spred
Right in the white Bole, it so betydde
As I shal synge, on Mayes day the thridde

That Pandarus for all his wise speche
Felte eke his parte of loues shottes kene
That coude he neuer so wel of louyng preche
It made his herte a daye ful ofte grene
So hope it, that him fyl that daye a tene

In loue, for whiche in wo to bedde he went
And made er it were day ful many a went

The swalow Proigne, with a sorowfull lay
Whan morow come, gan make her waymenting
Why she forshapen was, and euery lay
Pandare a bed, halfe in a slomberyng
Til she so nyghe him made her waymentyng
How Tereus gan forth her suster take
That with the noyse of her he gan awake

And to cal, and dresse him vp to ryse
Remembring him, his arande was to done
From Troylus, and eke his great empryse
And cast, & knewe in good plyte was ỳ mone
To done vorage, and toke his way full soone
Unto his neces palys, there besyde
Nowe Janus god of entre, thou him gyde

Whan he was come vnto his neces place
Where is my lady, to her folke (quod he)
And they him tolde, and in forthe in gan pace
And founde two other ladyes syt and she
Within a paued parlour, and they thre
Herden a mayden hem reden the geste
Of the siege of Thebes, whyle hem leste

(Quod Pandarus) madame god you se
With your boke, and al the companye
Eighe vncle myne, welcome twys (quod she)
And vp the rose, and by the honde in hye
She toke him fast, and sayd, this night thrye
To good mote it turne, of you I mette
And with ỳ worde, she down on benche him set

Ye nece, ye shul faren wel the bet
Yf god wol al this yere (quod Pandarus)
But I am sory that I haue you let
To herken of your boke ye prayse thus
For goddes loue what sayethe it, tel it vs
Is it of loue, or some good ye me lere
Uncle (quod she) your maystresse is nat here

With that they gonnen laugh, & tho she seyde
This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede
And we haue herd how ỳ kyng Layus deyde
Through Edippus his sonne, & al the dede
And here we stynten, at these letters rede
Howe the bysshop, as the boke can tell
Amphiorax, fyl through the grounde to hell

(Quod Pandarus) al this knowe I my selue
And al thassiege of Thebes, and the care
For herof ben there maked bokes twelue
But let be thys, and tel me howe ye fare
Do way your barbe, & shewe your face bare
Do way your boke, rise vp & let vs dannce
And let vs done to May some obseruaunce

Eighe, god forbyd (qd she) be ye mad
Is that a wydowes lyfe, so god you saue
By god ye maken me right sore adrad
Ye bene so wylde, it semeth as ye raue
It sat me wel bet aye in a caue
To byde, and rede on holy sayntes lyues
Let maydens gon to daunce, & yonge wyues.

As euer thryue I (quod this Pandarus)
Yet couthe I tel a thing, to don you play
Nowe vncle dere (quod she) tel it vs
For goddes loue, is than thassiege awey
I am of grekes ferde, so that I deye
Nay nay (qd he) as euer mote I thryue
It is a thyng wel bet than suche fyue

Ye holy god (quod she) what thing is that
What bet than suche fyue: eighe nay ywis
For al this worlde, ne can I reden what
It shulde ben, some iape I trowe it is
And but your seluen tel vs what it is
My wit is for to arede it al to leene
As helpe me god, I not what that ye meene

And I your borowe, ne neuer shal (qd he)
This thing be tolde to you, as mote I thriue
And why vncle myne, why so (quod she)
By god (qd he) that wol I tel as blyue
For proudest woman is there none on lyue
And ye it wyste, in al the towne of Troye
I tape nat, so euer haue I ioye

Tho gan she wondren more than before
A thousande folde, & downe her eyen cast
For neuer sythe the tyme that she was bore
To knowen thyng, desyred she so fast
And with a syke, she said him at the last
Now vncle myne, I nyl you not displese
Nor asken more, that may do you disese

So after this, with many wordes glade
And frendly tales, and with merry chere
Of this & that they spekē, and gonnen wade
In many an vnkouth glad & depe matere
As frendes done, whan they bethe yfere
Til she gan asken him howe Hector ferde
That was the townes wal, & greches yerde

ful

Ful wel I thanke it god, sayde Pandarus
Saue in his arme he hath a lytle wounde
And eke hys frethe brother Troylus
The wyse worthy Hector the secounde
In whom that euery vertue lyste habounde
As al trouthe, and al gentylesse
Wysedome, honour, fredome, & worthynesse

In good faythe eme (qõ she) that lyketh me
They fare wel, god saue hem bothe two
For trewelyche, I holde it great deynte
A kynges sonne in armes wel to do
And be of good condicions therto
For great power, and moral vertue here
Is selde yfene in one persone yfere

In good fayth that is sothe (qõ Pandarus)
But by my trouth, the king hath sõnes twey
That is to meane, Hector and Troylus
That certaynly though that I shulde dey
They ben as boyde of vices, dare I sey
As any men that lyuen vnder sonne
Her might is wide yknow, & what they cõne

Of Hector nedeth it no more for to tel
In all this worlde, there nys a better knight
Than he that is of worthynesse the wel
And he wel more vertue hath than might
This knoweth many a wyse & worthy knight
The same prise of Troylus I sey
God helpe me so, I knowe not suche twey

By god (qõ she) of Hector that is sothe
Of Troylus the same thyng trowe I
For dredelesse, men telleth that he dothe
In armes day by day, so worthely
And beareth hym here at home so gently
To euery wight, that al prise hath he
Of hem that me were leuest praysed be

Ye say right sothe ywis (qõ Pandarus)
For yesterday, who so had with him ben
Might haue wondred vpon Troylus
For neuer yet so thicke a swarme of bren
Ne flewe, as grekes from hym game fleen
And through the felde in euery wightes eere
There was no crye, but Troylus is there

Now here, nowe there, he hunted hem so fast
There nas but grekes blode, and Troylus
Nowe hym he hurt, and him al down he cast
Ire were he went it was arayed thus
He was her dethe, and helde a lyte for vs
That as fast day ther durst him non withstõde
Whyle that he helde his blody swerde in honde

Therto he is the frendelyst man
Of great estate, that euer I sawe my lyue
And where hym lyste, best felowshyp can
To suche as him thinketh able for to thryue
And with that word, tho Pandarus as blyue
He toke hys leaue, and sayd I wol gon hen
Nay, blame haue I vncle (quod he then)

What eyleth you to be thus wery soone
And namelyche of women, wol ye so
Nay sitteth downe, by god I haue to done
With you, to speke of welcome er ye go
And euery wight that was about hem tho
That herde that, gan ferre away to stonde
Whyle they two had al that hem lyst in honde

Whan that her tale al brought was to an ende
Of her estate, and of her gouernaunce
(Quod Pandarus now time is that I wende
But yet I say, aryseth let vs daunce
And caste your widowes habite to mischaunce
What lyste you thus your selfe to disfigure
Sythe you is tyde so glad an aduenture

But wel bethought, for loue of god (qõ he)
Shal I nat weten what ye meane of this
Ne, this thing asketh leaser tho (qõ she)
And eke me wolde muche greue this
If I it tolde, and ye it toke amys
Yet were it bette my tonge to helde stil
Than say a sothe, that were ayenst your wil

For nere by the goddesse Pryncipe
And Jupiter, that maketh the thonder ring
And the blisful Venus, that I serue
Ye ben the woman in this worlde lyuing
Without paramours, to my wetting
That I best loue, and lothest am to greue
And that ye weren wel your selfe I leue

Iwis myn vncle (qõ she) graunt mercy
Your frendship haue I founden euer yet
I am to no man holden trewely
So muche as you, and haue so lyte quite
And with the grace of god, emforth my wit
As in my gylte, I shal you neuer offende
And if I haue er this I wol amende

But for the loue of god, I you beseche
As ye be he, that I loue most and tryste

Let be to me you fremed maner speche
And say to me your nece, what you lyst
And with that worde, her uncle anon her kist
And sayd, gladly my leue nece dere
Take it for good, that I shal say you here

Wyth that, she gan her eyen downe to caste
And Pandarus to coughe gan alyte
And sayde: Nece alway lo, to the laste
Howe so it be, that some men bem belyte
With subtel art her tales for to endyte
Yet for al that in her entencyon
Her tale is al for some conclusyon

And sythe thende is euery tales strength
And this matter is so behouely
What shulde I paint, or drawen it on length
To you that ben my frende so faythfully
And with that worde he gan right inwardly
Beholden her, and loken in her face
And sayde, on suche a myrrour good grace

Than thought he thus, yf I my tale endyte
Aught harde, or make a proces any wyle
She shal no fauour haue therin but lyte
And trowe I wolde her in my wyl begyle
For tender wittes weuen al be wylle
Wher as they can not plaindiche tonderstond
For thy her wit to serue wol I fonde

And loked on her in a besy wyse
And she was ware that he beheld her so
Ah lorde, qd she so faste ye me auyse
Saue ye me neuer er nowe, what say ye no
Yes yes qd he and her wol er I go
But by my trouth I thought no wer, if ye
Be fortunate, for nowe men shal it se

For euery wight, some goodly auenture
Somtyme is shape, if he it can receyuen
But yf he wyl take of it no cure
Whe that it cometh, but wylfully it weyuen
Lo, neither case nor fortune him beereuen
But right his owne slouth & wretchednesse
And suche a wight is for to blame I gesse

Good auenture, O bele nece haue ye
Ful lightly founden, and ye conne it take
And for the loue of god, and eke of me
Catche it anone, lest auenture slake
What shulde I lenger processe of it make
Neue me your hond for in this world is non
If that you lyste a wight so wel begon

And sythe I spoke of good entencyon
As I to you haue tolde wel here before
And lowe as wel your honour & renoun
As any creature in al the worlde yboren
By al the othes that I haue you sworne
And ye be wrothe therfore or were I lye
Ne shal I neuer sene you ekre with eye

Beth nat agaste, ne quaketh nat, whereto
Ne chaunge nat for frere so your herte
For hardely the worste of this is do
And though my tale as nowe be to you newe
Yet trust alway, ye shal me fynde trewe
And were it thing that me thought bestirring
To you wolde I no suche tales bring

Nowe my good eme, for goddes loue I pray
(Qd she) come of and tel me what it is
For herde I am agast what ye wol say
And eke me longeth it to wit ywis
For whether it be wel, or be amis
Say on, let me not in this fraye dwel
So wol I done, nowe herkeneth I shal tel

Nowe nece myn, the kynges dere sonne
The good wyse worthy, fresshe and fre
Which alway for to done wel is his wonne
The noble Troylus so lowerth the
That but ye helpe it wol bys bane be
Lo here is al, what shulde I more sey
Doth what you lyst, to make him lyue or dey

But if ye let him dye, I wol seruen
Haue here my trouth, nere I wyl not lyen
Al shulde I with this knyfe my throte kerue
With that the teres burst out of his eyen
And sayde, if that ye bone be both dyen
Thus gyrlishly, than haue ye fisshed fayre
What meneth ye, though he with herte apeyre

Alas, he which that is my lorde so dere
That trewe man, that noble gentil knyght
That naught deserueth, but youre frebly chere
Ye him dyen, there be goth dyrright
And hasteth him, with al his ful myght
For to ben slayne, if his fortune aferme
Alas that god you suche a beaute lerne

If it be so that ye so cruel be
That of his deth you lysteth nought to recche
That is so trewe and worthy, as we se
Ne more than of a taper or a wrecche
If ye be suche, your beaute may nat strecche

To

To make amendes of so cruel a dede
Auysement is good before the nede

Wo worthe the fayre Gēme bertuleſſe
Wo worth that herbe also that doth no bote
Wo worth the beaute that is routhleſſe
Wo worth that wight trede eche vnō fote
And ye that ben of beaute croppe and rote
If therwithal in you ne be no routhe
Than is harme ye leuen by my trouthe

And also thynke wel, that this is no gaude
For me were leuer, thou, I, and he
Were honged, than I ſhulde ben his baude
As high as men might on vs alle yse
I am thyne Eme, the ſhame were to me
As wel as the, if that I ſhulde aſſent
Through min abet, ỹ he thin honour ſchent

Nowe vnderſtonde, for I you nought requere
To bynde you to hym, through no beheſt
Saue onely that ye make hym better chere
Than ye han don er this, and more feſte
So that his lyfe be ſaued at the leſte
This al and ſome, & playnly our entente
God helpe me ſo, I neuer other mente

Lo, this requeſt is nought but ſkyl vnto
Ne boute of treaſon parde is there none
I let the more, that ye harden this
Syn wolde wōder to ſene hym come & gone
Ther ayenſt anſwere I thus anone
That euery wight, but he be fool of kynde
Wol bende it loue of frendſhip vnto his mynde

Nay, who wol demen though he ſe a man
To temple goon, that he the ymages eſteth
Thynke ek, he nis wel & wyſely than he can
Gouerne hym ſelfe, ỹ he nothing forbeteth
That after he cometh, he pas & thō bi geteth
And ek therto he ſhal come here ſo ofte
That ſoone were it, thou al ỹ towne bejaſte

Suche loue of frēdes reygneth all this towne
And wite you in that maner cuermo
And god ſo wys be my ſaluacion
As I haue ſayde, youre beſt is to do ſo
But good nece, alway to myne bis wo
So let your daunger, fayre yf ben alyue
That of his herte, ye be not al to wyte

Caſſaybe, whiche ỹ herde hym in this wyſe
Thought, I ſhal feien what he meneth thus
Nowe Eme (qō ſhe) what wolde ye deuyſe
What is youre rede, I ſhulde done of thyſe
That is wel ſayd qō he, certayne beſt is
That ye him loue ayen for hys louyng
As loue for loue, is ſkylful guerdonyng

Thynke eke howe elde waſteth euery houre
In eche of you, a part of beaute
And therfore, er that age the deuoure
Go loue, for olde there will no wight of the
Let this prouerbe, a lore vnto you be
To late ywarre, qō beaute, whan it paſte
And elde daunteth daunger, at the laſte

The kynges foole is wont to crie loude
Whā ỹ hym thinketh a woman bereth hir eye
So longe mote ye liue, and al proude
Tyl crowes fete growe vnder youre eye
And ſende you than a myrour in to prie
In which that ye may ſe your face a mowe
Nece, I byd wyſhe you nomore ſorowe

With this he ſyghte, & caſte downe the herde
And he began to burſt and wepe anone
And ſayde, alas for me, why nere I borde
For of this worlde, the fayrhe is al agone
Alas, what ſhulden straunge vnto me bone
Whan he that for my bell tremble I tremble
Hate me to loue, and ſhulde it me diſſemble

Alas, I wolde haue ruſhed doune
That if that I, through my bele aſpre
Had lefte either hym or Achilles
Perce, or any other creature
Ye nolde haue had mercy ne meſure
Of me, but alway had me in repreue
Cros falſe worlde alas, who may it leue

What is this al the wy and al the treſſe
Is this youre rede is this my bitter caas
Is this the very mede of youre beheſt
Is al this payned proeeſſe (ſayd alas)
Wight for this tyme, O lady myn Pallas
Thou in this dredeful caſe for me puruey
For to atteyned am I, what I dey

With that the wan ful ſore wepfulle to ſyke
He may it be no bet quod Pandarus
By god I ſhal no more come here this weke
And god to ſorme, that am miſtruſted thus
I ſe wel nowe, ye ſtonden light of vs
Of our herte alas, I wofal wreche
Wiste ye yet time, of me were nought to reche

O cruel

O cruel god, o dispitous Marte
O furies thre of hel, on you I cry
So let me neuer out of thys house departe
Yf that I mente harme or vylanye
But syth I se my lorde more nedes dye
And I with him, here I me shryue and sey
That wickedly ye done vs bothe dey

But syth it lyketh you, that I be dede
By Neptunus that god is of the see
Fro this forthe shal I neuer eten brede
Tyl I myn owne herte bloode may see
For certayne I wol dye as soone as he
And vp he sterte, and on his way he raught
Tyl he agayne hym by the lappe caught

Creseyde, whiche ful wel nigh wode for feare
So as she was the fertfullest wyght
That might be, and herde eke with her eere
And sawe the sorowful cruell of the knyght
And in his prayer sawe eke non vnryght
And for the harme eke that might fal more
She gan to rise, and dredde her vnder sore

And thought thus, vnhappes fallen thicke
All day for loue, and in suche maner caas
As men ben cruel in hem selfe and wicke
And yf this man sle here hym selfe, alas
In my presence, it wyl be no solas
What men wolde of it deme, I can nat say
It nedeth me ful sygely for to play

And with a sorowful sigh she sayde thrie
Ah lorde, what me is tydde a sory chaunce
For myne eares lyeth in a iupardye
And eke myn eres lyfe lyeth in balaunce
But natheles, with gobbes countenaunce
I shal so done, myne honour shal I kepe
And eke hys lyfe, and syne for to wepe

Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese
Yet had I leuer maken hym good chere
In honour, than myn eres lyfe to lese
Ye sayne ye nothyng els me requere
Nowys quod he, myn owne nece dere:
Nowe wel quod she & I wol don my payne
I shal myn herte ayen my lust constrayne

But ye I nyl nat holden hym in honde
Ne loue a man, that can I naught ne may
Ayenst my wyl, but els wol I fonde
Myn honour saue, plesen him fro day to day
Therto nolde I not ones haue sayde nay
But that I dredde, as in my fantasye
But cesse cause, aye cesseth maladye

But here I make a protestacion
That in this processe if ye deper go
That certaynly, for no saluacion
Of you, though that ye steruen bothe two
Thought al the worlde on o day be my fo
Ne shal I neuer on him haue other routhe
I graunt wel, quod Pandare by my trouthe

But may I trust wel to you (quod he)
That of this thing that ye han bight me here
Ye wol it holde truely vnto me
Ye douteles quod she myn vncle dere
Ne that I shal haue cause in this matere
(Quod he) to playne, or ofter you to preche
Nay by no parde, what nedeth more speche

The fyl there in other tales glade
Tyl at the laste, o goode eme quod she tho
For loue of god whiche that vs bothe made
Tel me now fyrst ye wordes of hys wo
Or non of it but ye, he sayde no
Can be wel speke of loue quod she I prey
Tel me, for I the bet shal me purvey

Tho Pandarus alyte gan to smyle
And sayde: By my trouthe I shal now tel
Thus other day, nat gon ful longe while
Within the paleys gardyn by a wel
Chaunce he and I, wel halfe a day to dwel
Right for to speken of an ordynaunce
How we the gestes might best pleasaunce

And come after that we gone for to lepe
And casten with out bares to and fro
Tyl at the laste, he sayde, he wolde slepe
And on the grasse adowne, he layd him tho
And I after gan to romen to and fro
Tyl that I herde, as I walked alone
How he began, ful wofully to grone

Tho gan I stalke him softly behynde
And sykerly the sothe for to sayne
As I can clepe ayen nowe to my mynde
Right thus to loue, he gan him for to playne
He sayde: Lorde, haue routh vpon my payne
Al haue I ben rebel in myne entent
Nowe Mea culpa lorde I me repent

O god, that at thy disposicion
Lokest the fine, by iuste purueyaunce

Of euery wight, my lowe confession
Iacept in gree, and sende me suche penaunce
As lyketh the, but from me diseuerance
That may my goost departe alway fro the
Thou be my shylde, for thy benignite

For certes lorde, so sore hath she me wouñded
That stode i blacke, with lokyng of her eyen
That to myne hertes botome it is yfounded
Thrugh which I wot, þ I more nedes dien
This is þ worst, I dare me nought bewrien
And wel the hoter ben the gledes rede
That men hem wryen with ashen pale & dede

With that he smote hys hed adowne anone
And gan to mutter, I nat what trewely
And I with that gan styl away to gone
And lete therof, as nothyng wyst had I
And come agayne anon and stode hym by
And sayde awake, ye slepen al to longe
It semeth nought þ loue doth you wrong e

That slepen so, that no man may you wake
Who ley ever yet this so dul a man
Ye frend qð he do ye your herdes ake
For loue, and let me lyuen as I can
But lorde that he for wo was pale and wan
Yet made he tho as freshe a countenaunce
As though he shulde haue led the newe daunce

This passed forth, tyl nowe this other dare
It fel that I come romming al alone
Into hys chambre, & founde howe þ he lay
Upon his bedde: but man so sore grone
Ne herde I never, and what was his mone
Ne wyst I nought, for as I was comyng
Ful sodaynly, he lefte his complaynyng

Of whiche I toke somwhat suspection
And nere I come, and founde him wepe sore
And god so wysse be my saluacion
As never of thyng had I no routh more
For never ther with engyn ne with no loore
Unnethes myght I fro the herth him kepe
That yet frie I myne hert for him wepe

And god wot nedes sythe that I was borne
Was I so besy no man for to preche
Ne never was to wyght, so depe swore
Er he me tolde, who might ben his leche
But nowe to you rehersen al hys speche
Et al hys wofull wordes for to sowne
Ne byd me nought, but ye wol se me swoune

But for to saue hys lyfe, and els nought
And to non harme of you, thus am I driuen
And for the loue of god þ bs hath wrought
Suche chere him bothe, þ he & I mayn lyuen
Nowe haue I platte to you myn herte shriuē
And sythe ye wote that myne entent is clene
Take hede therof, for none yuel I mene

And right good thrift, I pray to god haue ye
That han such one raught without en nette
And be ye wyse, as ye be fayre to se
Ye el in the ryng, than is the Ruby lette
There were neuer two so wel ymette
As han ye ben bis al hole, as be is youre
There mighty god yet graut bs se þ houre

Nay therof spake I nat: I ha qð he
As helpe me god, ye shenden euery dele
I merey dere nece, anone qð he
What so I spake, I ment nought but wele
Of Paris the god, that beined is of stele
Nowe beth not wroth, my blod, my nece dere
Nowe wel qð she, forgeuen be it here

With this he toke his leaue, & home he wente
Ye lorde howe he was glad, and wel begon
Creseyde arose, no lenger she ne stente
But streight in to her closet went anon
And set her downe, as stil as any stone
And euery worde gan vp & downe to wende
That he had sayde, as it came her to mynde

And more some dele adoned in her thought
Right for the newe case, but when that she
Was ful auised, she found she might nought
Of peryl, why that she ought afrede be
For man may loue of possibylite
I woman so, his best may to bidde
And he nat loue ayen, but yet he bidde

But as she sate alone, and thought thus
Ector arose at sharmoche al wythout
And men cryed in the strete, se Troylus
Hath right now put to flyght þ grekes rout
With that gonne al her meyne for to shoute
A go we se, caste vp the gates wyde
For thrugh this strete be more to paleys ryde

For other way is fro the yates nowe
Of Dardanus there open is the cheyne
With that come he, & al hys folke anone
In easy pace ryding, in rouses tweyne
Right his happy day was forthe to seyne

Fol

For whiche men sayth may not disturbed be
That shal betyde of necessyte

This Troylus satte on hys baye stede
Al armed saue his heed, ful rychely
And wounded was hys horse, & gan to blede
On whiche he rode a pace ful softly
But suche a knyghtly syght trewely
As was on hym, was nat withouten fayle
To loke on Mars, that god is of batayle

So lyke a man of armes, and a knyght
He was to sene, fulfylled of hygh prowesse
For bothe he had a body, and myght
To don that thyng, as wel as hardynesse
And eke to sene hym in hys geare dresse
So fresche, so yonge, so weldy semed he
It was an heuen vpon hym for to se

Hys helme to hewen was in twenty place
That by a tyssue honge, hys backe behynde
His sheelde to dasshed w̄ swerdes & w̄ maces
In which men myght many an arowe fynde
That thrilled had horne, nerfe, and rynde
And aye the people cried, here cometh our joy
And next his brother, holder vp of Troye

For whiche he wext a litel reed for shame
When he so herde the people vpon hym crien
That to beholde, it was noble game
Howe sobrelyche he caste adowne his eyen
Creseyde anone gan al hys chere espyen
And let it so soft in her herte synke
That to her selfe she said, who yaue me drike

For al her owne thought, she wore al reed
Remembring her right thus, lo this is he
Which ỹ myne vncle sweren hath mote deed
But I on hym haue mercy and pyte
And with that thought for pure ashamed she
Gan in her heed to pul, and that as faste
Whyle he and al the people forth by paste

And gan to caste, & rollen vp and down
Within her thought hys excellent prowesse
And hys estate, and also hys renoun
His witte, hys shape, and eke his gentylnesse
But most her fauour was, for hys distresse
Was al for her, & thought it were a routhe
To sleen suche one, if that he ment trouthe

¶ Nowe might some enuyous iangle thus
This was a sodayne loue, howe might it be
That she so lyghtly loued Troylus
Right for the first syght: ye parde
Nowe who so sayde so, mote he neuer the
For euery thyng, a ground hath it nede
Er al be wrought, withouten any drede

For I say nat that she so sodaynly
Yaf hym her loue, but that she gan enclyne
To lyken hym tho, & I haue tolde you why
And after that, hys manhode and his pyne
Made that loue within her gan to myne
For whiche by proces, and by good seruyce
He wanne her loue, and in no sodayne wyse

And also blisful Venus wele arayed
Satte in her seuenth house of heuen tho
Disposed wele, and with aspectes payed
To helpe sely Troylus of hys wo
And sothe to sayne, she nas nat al a foe
To Troylus, in hys natyuyte
God wote, that wele the sooner sped he

Nowe let vs stente of Troylus a throwe
That tydeth forth, and let vs turne faste
Vnto Creseyde, that benge her heed ful lowe
There as she satte alone, and gan to caste
Wheron she wolde apoynt her at the laste
If it so were, her eme wolde cesse
For Troylus, vpon her for to pryesse

And lorde so she gan in her thought argue
In this mater, of which I haue you tolde
And what to don best were, and what eschue
That pryed she ful oft in many folde
Now was her herte warm, now was it colde
And what she thought, somwhat shal I write
As myn authour wryteth for tendyte

She thought first, that Troylus persone
She knewe by sight, & eke his gentrinesse
And thus she sayd, al were it nought to done
To graunt him loue, yet for his worthynesse
It were honour with play, & with gladnesse
In honeste, with suche a lorde to deale
For myne estate, and also for hys heale

Eke wel wot I, my kynges sonne is he
And syth he hath to se me suche delyte
Yf I wolde vtterlyche his syght flye
Paraunture he might haue me in dispyte
Through which I might stōde in worse plite
Nowe were I wyse, me hate to purchase
Without nede, there I may stonde in grace

In

In euery thing, I wote there lyth measure
For though a man forbyd dronkenesse
Be nought forbydden that euery creature
Be drynkelesse for alway as I gesse
Eke sithe I wot for me is his distresse
I ne ought not for that thing him dispise
Syth it is so, he meaneth in good wyse

And eke I knowe, of longe tyme agone
His thewes good, and that he ays not nyce
No vauntour sayne men, certayne he is none
To wyse is he, to done so great a vice
Me ais I nyl him neuer so cherice
That he shal make auaunt by iust cause
He shal me neuer bynde in suche a clause

Now set I case, the hardest is ywis
Men myght demen that he louyth me
What dishonour were it vnto me this
Dare ichc him let of that, why nay pardee
I knowe also, and alway here and se
Men louen women al thys towne about
Be they the worse, why nay wythout doute

I thinke eke howe, he worthy is to haue
Of al this noble towne the thriftyest
That women is, if che her honour saue
For out and out he is the worthyest
Saue onely hector, whiche that is the best
And yet his lyfe lythe al nowe in my cure
But suche is loue, and eke myne auenture

Me me to loue, a wonder is it nought
For wel wot I my selfe, so god me spede
I wol I that none wist of this thought
I am one the fayrest out of drede
And goodlyest, who so that taketh hede
And so men sayne in al the towne of Troye
What wonder is: though he of me haue ioye

I am myne owne woman wel at ese
I thanke it god, as after myne estate
Right yonge, a stonde vneyed in lusty lese
Vnbounten to no louys, and suche debate
Shal no husbonde sayne to me checke mate
For eyther they ben ful of ielousye
Or mastertul, or louen noueiry

What shal I don to what fyne lyue I thus
Shal I not loue, in case if that me lesteth
What pardieux I am not religyous
And though that I myne hert set at reste
Vpon this knyght, that is the worthyeste
And kepe alway myne honour, and my name
By al right it may do me no shame

But right as whan the sunne shyneth bright
In Marche, that chaungeth oft tyme his face
And that a cloud is put with winde to flight
Which ouerspradde the sunne, as for a space
A cloudy thought gan through her soule pace
That ouerspradde her bright thoughtes all
So that for feare almost she gan to fall

That thought was this: Alas sythe I am free
Shuld I nowe loue, and put in ieopardye
My sykernesse, and thrallen lybertie
Alas, how durste I thynken that folye
May I not wel in other folke aspye
Her dredeful ioy, her constreynt, and her payne
Ther loueth non, that she ne hath way to playne

For loue is yet the most stormy lyfe
Right of him selfe, that euer was begonne
For euer some mistrust, or newe stryfe
There is in loue, some cloude ouer the sonne
Therto we wretched women nothyng conne
Whan vs is wo, but wepe and sit and thynke
Our wreche is this, our owne wo to drynke

Also wicked tonges ben so prest
To spekc vs harme, eke men ben so vntrue
That right anon as cessed is her lest
So cesseth loue, and forthe to loue a newe
But harme vdo is done, who so it rewe
For though these men for loue hem firste to sterue
Ful sharpe begynnyng byeth oft at ende

Howe often tyme may men rede and seme
The treson, that to women hath be do
To what fyne is suche loue, I can not seme
Or where becometh it, whan it is go
There is no wight that wote, I trowe so
Wher it becometh, lo, no wight on it spureth
That erst was nothyng, in to naught turneth

Howe besy if I loue eke must I be
To plesen hem, that iangle of loue, and demen
And coyen hem, that they say no harme of me
For though there be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harme, that folke her frendes quemen
And who may stoppen euery wicked tonge
Or sowne of belles, while that they ben ronge

And after that her thought gan for to clere
And saide, he which that nothyng vnderfongeth

Nothing aqueueth, be him loothe or dere
And with another thought her herte quaketh
Than slepeth hope, and after drede awaketh
Now hote now cold, but thus betwixe twey
She cryd her vp, and went her for to pley

Adowne the stayre, anon right tho she went
In to her gardyn, with her neces thre
And vp & downe, they maden many a went
Flerippe and she, Tarbe, and Antigone
To playen, that it ioye was to se
And other of her women a great route
Her folowed in the gardyn al aboute

This yerde was large, & rayled al the aleyes
And shadowed wel, w blosmy bowes grene
And benched newe, and sonded all the wayes
In which she walketh arme in arme betwene
Til at the last Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troyan songe to syngen clere
That it an heuen was, her voyce to here

She sayde: O loue, to whom I haue, & shall
Ben humble subiect, trewe in myne entent
As I best can, to you loude yeue I the al
For euer more myne herres lust to rent
For neuer yet thy grace no wight sent
So blysful cause as me, my lyfe to lede
In al ioye and surete, out of drede

The blysful god, hath me so wel beset
In loue twys, that al that bereth lyfe
Ymagynen ne couthe how to be bet
For lorde without enuye or stryfe
I loue one, whiche that most is entyrely
To seruen wel, vnwerily or vnfayned
That euer was, & left with harme distayned

Is he that is the wel of worthynesse
Of trouth ground, myrrour of goodlyhed
Of wyt Apollo, stone of sykernesse
Of verrne cote, of lowe fynder and herd
Through which is al sorowe fro me ded
Iwys I loue him best, so doth he me
Now good thrift haue he, wher soeuer he be

Who shuld I thanke but you god of loue
Of al this blysse, in which to bathe I gynne
And thanked be ye lorde, for that I loue
This is the right lyfe that I am inne
To flemen al maner vyce and synne
This doth me so to vertue for to entende
That day by day I in my wyll amende

And who that saith þ for to loue is vyce
Or thraldom, thoughe he feele in it distresse
Pe eyther is envyous, or right vyce
Or is vnmyghty for his sorcudnesse
To louen, for suche maner folke I gesse
Disdamen loue, as nothyng of him knowe
They speken, but they benten neuer his bowe

What is the sonne worse of kynde right
Though þ a man, for feblenesse of his eyen
May not endure on it to se for bryght
Or loue the worse, that wretches on it cryen
No wele is worth, that may no sorowe dryen
And for thy, who that hath an heed of verre
Fro cast of stones ware him in the werre

But I with al myne hert, and al my myght
As I haue sayd, wol loue vnto my last
My dere hert, and al myne owne knyght
In whiche myne herte growen is so fast
And his in me, that it shal euer last
Al dredde I first loue him to begyn
Now wot I wel there is no peryl in

And of her song right with þ word she stent
And therwithal, now nece (qd Creseyde)
Who made this songe, now vh so good entent
Antygone answerde anon, and sayde
Madame twys the goodlyest mayde
Of great estate in al the towne of Troye
And led her lyfe in most honour and ioye

For sothe so semeth it by her songe
Quod tho Creseyde, & gan therwith to syke
And sayd: lorde, is there suche blysse amonge
These louers, as they can layse endite
Ye wysse quod fresshe Antigone the white
For al the folke that haue or ben on lyue
Ne con wel the blysse of loue discryue

But wene ye that euery wrecche wote
The parfyte blysse of loue, why nay ywis
They wenen al be lone, if one be bote
Do way do waye, they wote nothynge of this
Men more aske of sayntes, if it is
Ought faire in heuen, & why: for they can tell
And aske feendes, if it be foule in hell

Creseyde vnto þ purpose naught answerde
But sayd, iwys it wol be myght as faste
But euery word, which that she of her herde
She gan to printen in her hert faste
And aye gan loute her lasse for to agaste

Than

Than it dyd erst, and synken in her herte
That she wax somwhat able to conuerte

The dayes honour, and the heuens eye
The nyghtes foe, al this clepe I the sonne
Gan westren fast, & downwarde for to wyre
As he that had his dayes course ryonne
And white thinges worken dymme and donne
For lacke of lyght, and sterres for to apere
That she and al her folke in went yfere

So whan it lyked her to gon to reste
And voyded weren they that voyden ought
She sayd, that to slepen wel her leste
Her women sone tyll her bed her brought
Whan al was huste, than lay she tyll & thought
Of al this thing the manet and the wyse
Reherce it nedeth not, for ye ben wyse

A nyghtyngale vpon a Cedre grene
Under the chambre wall, there as she lay
Ful loude songe ayen the moone shene
Paraventure in his byrdes wyse a lay
Of loue, that made her herte frethe & gay
That herkened she so longe in good entente
Tyl at the last the deed slepe her hent

And as she slept, anon right tho her mette
How that an Egle fethered white as bone
Under her brest his long clawes sette
And out her herte he rent, and that anon
And dyd his hert into her brest to gon
Of which she nought agroste, ne nothig smerte
And forth he flyeth, with hert left for herte

¶ Now lef her slepe, & we our tales holde
Of Troylus, that is to paleys rydden
Fro the scarmyche of whiche I tolde
And in his chambre sate, and hath abydden
Tyl two or thre of his messangers yeden
For Pandarus, and foughten him ful fast
Tyl they him foude, & brought him at ỳ last

This Pandarus came leapyng in at onys
And sayd thus, who hath ben wel ybete
To day with swerdes, & stonge stones
But Troylus, that hath caughte him an hete
And gan to laye, & sayd, lorde ye sweete
But ryse and let vs soupe, & go to reste
And he answerde him, do we as the leste

With al the hast goodly as they myght
They spedde hem fro the souper, and to bed
And euery wight out at the doze him dyght
And whider him lyst, vpon his way him sped
But Troylus thought that his hert bled
For wo, tyl that he herde some tydyng
And sayd frende, shal I nowe wepe or synge

(Quod Pandarus) be stylle & let me slepe
And do on thyne hoode, thy nedes spedde be
And chese if thou wolte synge, daunce, or lepe
At shorte wordes thou shalte trowe me
Sir, my nece wol don wel by the
And loue the best, by god & by my trouthe
But lacke of pursute make it in thy slouthe

For thus forforth I haue thy werke begon
Fro day to day, tyl this day by the morowe
Her loue of frendshyp haue I fro the won
And therfore hath she laid her faith to borowe
Algate a foote is hameled of the forowe
What shuld I longer sermonyng it holde
As ye haue herde before, al be him tolde

But right as floures thrioys ỳ colde of nyght
Iclosed, stoupen in her stalkes lowe
Redressen hem ayen the sonne bright
And spreden in her kynde course by rowe
Right so gan tho his eyen vp to throwe
This Troylus, and sayd: O Venus dere
Thy might, thy grace, yheryed be it here

And to Pandarus he held vp both his handes
And sayde, lorde al thyn be that I shame
For I am bolde, and broken ben my bandes
I thousande Troyes, who so that me blame
Eche after other, god so wys me saue
Ne myght me so gladen, to ryme here
I: spredeth so for ioye it wol to berste

But lorde how shall I don, how shal I lyuen
What shal I nede my dere herte se
How shal this longe tyme away be dryuen
Tyl that thou be aven at her fro me
Thou mayst answere, abyde abyde: But he
That hangeth by the necke, lothe to saynte
In great disease abydeth for the payne

Al easily now, for the loue of Marte
(Quod Pandarus) for euery thing hath tyme
So longe abyde, tyl that the nyght departe
For also syker as thou west here by me
And god to forne, I wol be there at prime
And for thy werke somwhat, as I shal saye
Vp on some other wight thys charge laye

For parde god wot, I haue euer yet
Ben redy the to serue, and this nyght
Haue I not sayned, but cmfor the my wyt
Done al thy lust, and shal with al my myght
Do now as I shal sayne, and fare aright
And if thou nylte, wyte al thy selfe thy care
On me is nought alonge thyn yuel fare

I wote wel that thou wyser art than I
A thousande folde: but yf I were as thou
God helpe me so, as I wolde verely
Right of myne owne honde write her nowe
A letter, in which I wolde her tellen howe
I sarde a mysse, and her beseche of routhe
Now helpe thy self, a leaue it for no slouthe

And I my selfe shal therwith to her gon
And whan thou woste þ I am with her there
Wer the thou vp on a courser right anon
Ye hardely, right in thy best gere
And ride forth by þ place, as naught ne were
And thou shalt fynde vs if I may syttyng
At some wyndowe, in to the strete lokyng

And if the lyst, than mayst thou vs salue
And vpon me make thou thy countenaunce
But by thy lyfe be ware, and fast eschue
To tarryen ought, god thyld vs fro mischaúce
Ryde forth thy way, a holde thy gouernaúce
And we shal speke of the somwhat I trowe
Whan thou art gon, to do thyn erles glowe

Touchyng thy letter thou art wise ynoughe
I wot thou nylte it deliuerlyche endyte
As make it with these argumentes roughe
Ne seruey myselfe or crafterly thou it write
Be blotte it with thy teeres eke al vyte
And if thou write a goodly worde al softe
Though it be good, reherce it not to ofte

For though the best harpour vpon lyue
Wold on the best sowned ioly harpe
That euer was, with al his fyngers fyue
Touche aye o strynge, or aye o warble harpe
Were his nayles poynted neuer so sharpe
It shulde make euery wight to dull
To here his glee, a of his strokes full

Ne iombre eke no discordant thing yfere
As thus, to vsen termes of physyke
In loues termes holde of thy matere
The forme alway, and do that it be lyke
For if a peyntour wolde paynte a pyke
With asses fete, and hreded as an ape
It cordeth not, so were it but a iape

This counsayle lyked wel vnto Troylus
But as a dredeful louer, he sayd this
Alas my dere brother Pandarus
I am ashamed for to wryte ywis
Lest of myn innocence I sayd amys
Or that she nolde it for dispyte rece yue
Than were I deed, ther nilt it nothig weiue

To that Pandare answerde, if the lest
Do that I say, and let me therwith gon
For by that lorde that formed est and west
I hope of it to bring answere anon
Right of her honde, a if that thou nylte non
Let be, and sory more he ben his lyue
Ayenst thy lust, that helpeth the to thriue

(Od Troylus) depardieux yche assent
Syth that yche lyst, I wol aryse and write
And blyssful god pray yche with good entent
The viage and the lettre I shall endyte
So spede it, and thou Cytherea the whyte
Yeue thou me wyt, my lettre to deuyse
And ser him downe, a wrot right in this wise

First he gan her his right lady call
His hertes lyfe, his lust, his sorowes leche
His blysse, and eke these other termes all
That in suche case ye louers al seche
And in ful humble wyse, as in his speche
He gan him recommaunde vnto her grace
To tell al howe, it asketh moche space

And after this ful lowly he her prayde
To be nought wrothe, though he of his folye
So hardy was to her to wryte, and sayde
That loue it made, or els muste he dye
And pitously gan mercy for to crye
And after that he sayd, and lyed ful loude
Him selfe was lyte worthe, a lasse he coude

And that she wold haue his cõnyng excused
That lyte was, and eke he dradde her so
And his vnworthynesse aye he accused
And after that than gan he tel his wo
But that was endeles without ho
And sayd, he wold in trouth alway him holde
And redde it ouer, and gan the lettre folde

And with his salte teeres gan he barbe
The ruby in his signet, and it sette

Upon

Upon the were delyuerlyche and rathe
Therwith a thousande tymes, er he lette
He kyste the the letter that he shette
And sayde, lettre a blysful destine
The shapen is, my lady shal the se

Thys Pandare toke the lettre, & that betyme
A morowe, and to his neces paleys sterte
And fast he swore, that it was passed prime
And gan to rape, and sayd: ywis myne herte
So fresshe it is, although it sore smerte
I may nat slepe neuer a Mayes morowe
I haue a lady wo, a lusty sorowe

Creseyde, whan that she her vncle herde
With dredful herte, and desyrous to here
The cause of his comminge, thus answerde
Now by your faith myn vncle, qd she dere
What maner wyndes gydeth you nowe here
Tell vs your dolye wo, and your penaunce
How fortouth be ye put in loues daunce

Be god qd he I hope alway behynde
And to laugh, it thought her herte brest
(Qd Pãdarus loke alway that ye fynde
Game in myn hood, but herkeneth if you lest
Ther is right now come into ỹ towne a gest
A greke espye, and telleth new thynges
For whiche I come to tel you ne we tidynges

In to the gardyn go we, and ye shall here
Al priuely of this a longe sermoun
With that they wenten arme in arme yfere
Into the gardyn fro the chambre doun
And whan he was so farre, that the soun
Of that he spake, no man heren myght
He sayd her thus, and out the letter plyght

Lo, he that is al holly yours free
Him recommaundeth lowly to your grace
And sent you this letter here by me
Im̃yseth you on it, whan ye han space
And of some goodly answere you purchase
Or helpe me god so, playnely for to sayne
He may not longe lyuen for his payne

Ful dredefully tho gan she stonde styl
And toke it not, but al her humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and sayd sertyn̄ nay vyl
For loue of god, that toucheth such matere
Me bring me none, and also vncle dere
To myne estate haue more regarde I pray
Than to his lust, what shulde I more say

And loketh nowe if this be resonable
And letteth not for fauour ne for slouthe
To sayne a sothe, now is it conenable
To myne estate, by god and by my trouthe
To take it, or to haue of him routhe
In harmyng of my selfe, or in repreue
Beare it ayen, for him that ye on leue

This Pandarus gan her for to stare
And sayd, now is this the greatest wonder
That euer I sawe, lat be this nyce fare
To deth mote I smytten be with thonder
Yf for the cyte, whiche that stonden yonder
Wold I a letter vnto you bring or take
To harme of you: what lyst you thus it make

But thus ye faren well nyghe all and some
That he that most desyreth you to serue
Of him ye recche lest, where he become
And whether that he lyue, or elis sterue
But for al that, that euer I may deserue
Refuse it not qd he and herte her fast
And in her bosome the letter downe he thrast

And sayd her now cast it away anon
That folke may sene, & gauren on vs tuay
(Quod she I can abyde yvl they be gon
And gan to smyle, & sayd him eftsone I pray
Suche answere as you lyst your selfe purchase
For trewly I wot no letter is none
Now, than wol I qd he ye endyte

Therwith she lough, and sayd go we dyne
And he gan at him selfe tape faste
And sayd nece, I haue so grete a pyne
For loue, that euery the other day I faste
And gan his best tapes forth to caste
And made her so to laugh at his folye
That she for laughter wende for to dye

And whan ỹ she was comen into the hall
Now eme qd she we wol go dyne anon
And gan some of her women to her call
And bretghte in to her chambre gan she gone
But of her besynesses this was one
Amonges other thynges, out of drede
Ful priuely this letter for to rede

Ayrsed word by word in euery lyne
And fonde no lacke, she thought he conde his
And vp it put & went her in to dyne
And Pandarus, that in a studye stoode
Or he was ware, she toke him by the hoode

And sayd, ye were caught er that ye wyste
I vouchesafe (qd he) do what you lyste

Tho wyschen they, and set hem downe & ete
And after noone ful styghly Pandarus
Gan draw him to ꝑ wyndowe ayen the strete
And said neer, who hath arayed thus
The yonder house, that stant afornen vs
Which house qd he and gan for to beholde
And knew it wel, & whose it was him tolde

And fellen forth in spreche of thynges smale
And satten in the wyndowe both tuey
Whan Pandarus sawe tyme vnto his tale
And sawe wel that her folke were al awey
Now neer myn nel on quod he I prey
Now lyketh you the lettre that ye wot
Can ye theron, for by my trouth I not

Therwith al rosy hewed tho wore he
And gan to him, and said, so I trowe
Aquyte him wel for goddes sonde qd he
My self to medes wol the lettre sowe
And bede his bondes vp, and sat on knowe
Now good neer, be it neuer the lyte
Yeue me the labour, it to sowe and plyte

Ye, for I can so wryten qd he tho
And eke I not what I should to him say
Nay neer qd Pandare say not so
Yet at the leste, thonketh him I pray
Of his good will qd, beth him not to dey
Now for the loue of me my neer dere
Refuseth not al this tyme my prayere

Depardieux qd he god leue al be tweie
God helpe me so, this is the first lettre
That euer I wrote, ye al or any deie
And into a cloket fel to sowle her bettre
She went alone, & gan her bethe bethrette
Out of disdaynes prison, but a lyte
And set her down, and gan a lettre wryte

Of whiche to tel in shorte is myn entent
The effecte, as ferre as I can vnderstonde
She thonked him, of al that he wel ment
Towardes her, but holden him in honde
She nolde not me make her feinen bonde
In loue, but as his sister him to plese
She wolde aye fayne, to done his herte ese

She shette it, and to Pandare in to gon
There as he sat, and loked in to strete
And downe she set her by him on a stone
Of iaspre, vpon a quysshen of golde ybete
And sayd, as wisely helpe me god the grete
I neuer dyd a thyng with more payne
Than write this, to which ye me constrayne

And toke it him: he thonked her, and sayde
God wot of thing ful often lothe begonne
Cometh ende good: and neer myne I reserde
That ye to him of harde nowe ben ywonne
Ought he be glad, by god & yonder sonne
For why, men sayn the impressions lyghte
Ful lyghtly ben aye redy to the flyghte

But ye han played the tyraunt al to longe
And harde was it your herte for to graue
Now sende, that ye no lenger on it honge
Al wolden ye the forme of daunger saue
But hasteth you to done him ioye haue
For trusteth wel, to longe vdone hardnesse
Causeth despyte ful often for displesse

And right as they declared this matere
Lo Troylus, right at the stretes ende
Came ryding with his trouthe felawe yfere
Al softely, and thyderward gan bende
Ther as thy sat, as was his way to wende
To palays warde, and Pandare him aspyed
And sayd, neer yfere lobe cometh here ryde

Se, stye not in, be frethe be I suppose
Lest he mysdeme, that ye him ersen
Nay nay qd he, a thefe as erbe as rose
And that he gan her humbly faire
And forth ryding, and ofte his hedes bare
And vp his lokes debonairly he caste
And bekked on Pandare, & forthe he paste

God wot if he sat on his horse aright
Ful goodly was before that the day
God wot wher he were lyther a manly knyght
Al that I write, or tel of his aray
Therefore, which that al these thynges sey
To tell in shorte, her lyketh al yfere
His person, his aray, his lokes, his chere

His goodly maner, and his gentrylesse
Ther wel, that neuer sythe that he was borne
So hab he suche routhe of his distresse
And how so, the harde hard ben here before
To god hope I, the hath now caught a thorne
Shal nat pul it out this neer wyne
God leube me suche thynges on to pyne

Pandare

Pandare, whiche that stode her faste by
Fro vpon hotte, and he began to smyte
And sayde, nece I pray you hertely
Tel me that I shal aske you alyte
A woman ꝑ were of his dethe to wyte
Without his gilt, but for her lacke of routh
Were it wel done (qꝺ he) naye by my trouth

God helpe me so (qꝺ he) ye say me sothe
Ye felen wel your selfe that I nought ive
Lo, rounde he rydeth (qꝺ he) ye so he dothe
Wel (qꝺ Pandare, as I haue tolde you thrive
Let be your nyce shame, and your folye
And spede with him, in ealyng of his herte
Lest nyerte nat do you bothe smerte

But theron was to heauen and to done
Considerynge al thyng, it may nat be
And why for shame, it were eke to sone
To graunten him so great a ladye
For plainly her entent, as sayde she
Was for to loue him bothe, if she might
And guerdon him with nothyng but with sight

But Pandare thought, it shal nat be so
If that I may, thys nyce opynyon
Shal nat ben holden fully yeres two
That shuld I make of this a longe sermon
He muste assente on that conclusyon
As for the tyme, and wham that it was nie
And al was wel, he tolde and rolde his leue

And on his way fast homewarde he spedde
And right for ioy he felte his herte daunce
And Troylus he founde alone abedde
That lay, as done theie louers in a traunce
Betwixen hope and derke desesperaunce
But Pandare, right at hys comynge
He long as who sayth, lo, somwhat I bring

And sayde, rise is in thys beddle so sone
Ybaryed thus, it am I frende (qꝺ he)
Who Troylus (quod) helpe me to the moone
(Qꝺ Pandarus) thou shalt vp tyde and se
Acharme that was sent right nowe to the
The whiche can healen the of thyne arrete
If thou do forth with al thy bellymelle

Yet through the might of god (qꝺ Troylus)
And Pandarus gan him the letter take
And sayde, parde god hath holpen vs
Haue here a lyght, and loke on all theise blake
But oft gan the herte glad and quake
Of Troylus, whyle he it gan to rede
So as the wordes yaue hym hope or drede

But finally he toke al for the beste
That she him wrote, for somwhat he behelde
On which he thought he might his best rest
Al couered she the wordes vnder shelde
Thus to the more worthy part he helde
That what for hope, and Pandarus behelde
Hys great wo forye he at the leste

But as we may al day our felawship
Through wood or feld the more fyre
Lyghe for encrease of hoope, of what it be
Therwith ful ofte encreaseth eke desyre
Lo as an oke cometh of a lytel spyre
So through this letter, which ye han herde
Encreasen gan desyre of whiche he brenne

Wherfore I say alway, that day and nyght
This Troylus gan to desyren more
The he did erst through hope, and did his myght
To parten on, as by Pandarus lore
And written to her of hys sorowes sore
Fro day to day, he let it nought refreyde
That by Pandare he somwhat wrote or seyde

And dyd also his other obseruaunces
That trl a louer longeth in thys caas
And after that hys dere tumed on chaunces
So was he ryther glad, or sayde alas
And held after hys wordes are hys paas
And after, suche answere as he badde
So were his dares forth ryther gladde

But to Pandare alway was his recours
And prouely gan aye on hym to playne
And hym he dyde of rede, and some socours
And Pandarus, that sawe his wode payne
Nere wel nigh dede for routh soothe to sayne
And bysely with al his herte caste
Some of his wo to lleem, and that as faste

And sayd, I wolde a frende and brother dere
God wot that thy disease dothe me wo
But wolt thou trwen al this wotul chere
And by my counsayl, er it be dayes two
And god to forme, yet shal I shape it so
That thou shalt come in to a certayne place
Ther as ꝑ mayst thy selfe prayen her of grace

And certaynly I not if thou it woste
But they that ben experte in loue, it say

It is one of these thynges sothereth most
A man to haue a leyser for to pray
And syker place, his wo for to bewray
For in good herte it more some touch impresse
To here and se the grisliesse in distresse

Parauenture thynkest thou, though it be so
That kynde wolde her done for to begynne
To haue a maner routh vpon my wo
Sayth dauger nay, thou shalt me neuer win
So ruleth her hertes gostly withyn
That though she bende, yet she stont on rote
What in effect is this vnto my bote

Thynke here ayen, whan that the sturdy oke
On whiche men hacketh ofte for the nones
Receyued hath the happy fallyng stroke
The great swerght doth it come al at ones
As done these rockes, or these myne stones
For swifter course cometh thig ỳ is of wight
When it discendeth, than done thynges light

But rede that bowyth down for euery blaste
Ful lyghtly cesse wynde, it wol atyse
But so ne‑l not an oke, whan it is caste
It nedeth me nought longe the forbyse
Men shal reioysen of a gerat empryse
Archeued wel, and stant withouten dout
Al haue men ben the lenger there about

But Troylus, nowe tel me if the lest
A thynge, whiche that I shal aske the
Whiche is thy brother, that thou louest best?
As in thy very hertes priuyte
I wis my brother Deiphebus tho (qõ he)
Now qõ Pandare er houres twyse twelue
Ye shal the case, vnwist of it hym selue

Nowe let me alone, and worken as I may
(Qõ he) and to Deiphebus went he tho
Whiche had his lorde, a great frende ben aye
Saue Troylus no man he loued so
To tel in shorte without wordes mo
(Quod Pandarus) I pray you that ye be
Frende to a cause, whiche that toucheth me

Yes parde (qõ Deiphebus) wel thou wotest
Al that euer I may, and god to fore
Al were it but for the man I loue moste
My brother Troylus, but say wherfore
It is, for sythe the day that I was bore
I nas, ne neuer mo to ben I thynke
Fyenst a thyng that myght the forthynke

Pandare gan hym thanke, and to hym seyde
Lo sir, I haue a lady in this towne
That is my nece, and called is Creseyde
Whiche some men wolde done oppressyoun
And wrongfully haue her possessyoun
Wherfore I of your lordshyp you beseche
To ben our frende, withouten more speche

Deiphebus hym answerde: O, is nat this
That thou spekest of to me thus straungely
Creseyde my frende? ye sayde hym yes
Than nedeth (qõ Deiphebus) hardely
No more of this to spek, for trusteth wel ỳ I
Wol be her champyon with spore and yerde
I ne rought nat, though all her foes it herde

But tel me howe, for thou wost this matere
I myght best auayen, nowe lette se
(Qõ Pandarus) if ye my lorde so dere
Wolden as nowe do this honour to me
To prayen her to mowe, so that she
Came vnto you, her playntes to deuyse
Her aduersaries wolde of it agryse

And if I more durst prayе as nowe
And chargen you to haue so great trauayle
To haue some of your brethrē here with you
That mighten to her cause bet auayle
Than wote I wel she might neuer fayle
For to ben holpen, what at your instaunce
What with her other frendes gouernaunce

Deiphebus, which that comen was of kynde
To al honour and bounte to conseute
Answerde, it shal be done: And I can fynde
Yet greater helpe to this myne entente
What woldest ỳ sayne, if for Helayne I sent
To speke of this, I trowe it be the belle
For she may leden Paris as her lyste

Of Hector, which ỳ is my lorde my brother
It nedeth nat to prayen hym frende to be
For I haue herde hym, o tyme and eke other
Speken of Creseyde suche honour, that he
May sayne no bet, such hap to hym hath she
It nedeth nat his helpes more craue
He shal be suche, ryght as we wol him haue

Speke thou thy selfe also to Troylus
On my behalfe, and pray him with vs dyne
Sir, al this shalbe done (qõ Pandarus)
And toke his leaue, and neuer gan to fyne
But to hys neces house as streight as lyne

He

He came, and founde her fro the meate aryse
And let him down, & spake right in this wise

He sayde, O dere god, so haue I ronne
Lonece myn, se ye nat howe I swete
I not where ye the more thanke me conne
Be ye not ware howe false Poliphete
Is nowe aboute ertsones for to plete
And bringe on you aduocacyes newe?
I, no (qd she) and chaunged al her hewe

What is he more about me to dretche
And done me wronge, what shal I don, alas
Yet of hym selfe nothyng wolde I retche
Nere it for Antenor and Eneas
That ben his frendes in suche maner caas
But for the loue of god, myn vncle dere
No force of that, let hym haue al ytere

Withouten that, I haue ynough for vs
Nay qd Pandare it shal nothyng be so
For I haue ben ryght nowe at Deiphebus
At hector, and myn other lordes mo
And shortly maked eche of hem bys so
That by my thrifte, he shal it neuer winne
For aught he can, whan so that he beginne

And as they caften what was best to done
Deiphebus, of hys owne curtesye
Came her to pray, in his proper persone
To holde hym on the morowe company
At dyner, whiche she nolde not denye
But goodly gan to hys prayer obey
He thonked her, and went vpon hys wey

Whan this was don, thys Pandare anone
Tolde in shorte, & forth he gan to wende
To Troylus, as fyl as any stone
And al this thing he tolde hym worde & ende
And howe that he Deiphebus gan to blende
And sayde hym, now is tyme of ye conne
To bere the wel to morowe, & al is wonne

Now speke, now pray, now prouffre cõplain
Let nat for nyce shame, drede, or slouthe
Somtyme a man mote tel his owne payne
Beleue it, and she wol haue on the routhe
Thou shalt ben saued by thy fayth in trouth
But wel wot I, thou nowe art in a drede
And what it is, I lay that I can arede

Thou thinkest now, how shulde I dó al this
For by myn cheres mosten folke espye
That for her loue is, that I fare amis
Yet had I leuer vnwist for sorowe dye
Nowe thynke nat so, for thou dost grete folye
For I right nowe haue founden a maniere
Of sleight, for to kouere al thy chere

Thou shalt gon ouernyght, & that blyue
Vnto Deiphebus house, as the to play
Thy malady away the bet to dryue
For whiche thou semest sicke forth to say
Sone after that, in thy bedde the lay
And say thou mayst no lenger vp endure
And lye right there, and byde thyn auenture

Say that thy feuer is wonte the for to take
The same tyme, and lasse ryl a morowe
And let se nowe howe wel thou canst ma[illegible]
For parde sicke is he that is in sorowe
So nowe farwel, and Venus here to bidde we
I hope and thou this purpose holde stedme
Thy grace she shal fully there conforme

(Qd Troylus) vnis thou nedelesse
Counsayl lest me, [illegible]
For I am sicke [illegible]
So that wel nigh I sterue for the payne
(Qd Pandarus) thou shalt ye better playne
And haste the selfe nede to counterfete
For hym demeth men bote, ye seeth hym swete

Lo, holde the at thy tryste close, and I
Shal wel the dere vnto the bowe dryue
Therwith he toke hys leaue al softly
And Troylus to paleys went blyue
So glad ne was he neuer in al hys lyue
And to Pandarus rede gan al a fenge
And to Deiphebus house at nyght he wente

What nedeth it you to tellen al the chere
That Deiphebus vnto hys brother made
Or his arts, or hys sleyghe maniere
Howe men gon hym with clothes for to lade
Whe he was layd, & how mé wold him glad
But al for nought, he helde forth aye the wyse
That ye han herde Pandare er this deuyse

But certayne is, er Troylus hym leyde
Deiphebus had prayed him ouernyght
To ben a frende, and helpyng to Creseyde
God wot that he graunted anon tyght
To ben her ful frend with al his myght
But such a nede was it to prayen him thenne
As for to bydde a woode man to renne

The morowe came, and gan the tyme
Of mealtyde, that the fayre queme Heleyne
Shope her to ben anboure after the prime
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde fayne
But as hys suster, homely sothe to sayne
She came to dyner, in her playne entent
But goddes Pandare wyll al what this ment

Came eke Creseyde al innocent of this
Intygoure her nece, and Cardo also
But tyre we nowe prolixite best is
For loue of god, and let vs faste go
Right to the feste, withouten tales mo
Wher al this folke assembled in hys place
And let vs of her salutynges pace

Great honour dyd hem Deiphebus certayne
And fedde hem wel, with al that might lyke
But euermo alas, was his refrayne
Wher good brother Troylus the fyke
Lythe set, and therwithal he gan to fyke
And after that he payned hym to glade
Hem as he might, and chere good he made

Complayned eke Heleyne of hys sickenesse
So tenderfully that it pete was to here
And euery wight gan wexen for arge
I leche anon, and sayde in this manere
Dame queen folke, this charme I wol the lere
But there fare one, al is for her nat to teche
That thought, yet best could I hem hys leche

Fyrst complayne hem gonnen they to preyse
As folke don yet whan some wyght hath begon
To preyse a man, and with preyse hym reyse
A thousande folde yet brygher than the son
Lye is, be can, that fre we lordes kon
And Pandarus of that they wolde affreme
Ne nought forgate her playsing to confreme

Herde al this thing Creseyde wel ynough
And euery worde gan for to notifye
For which with sobre chere her herte lough
For who is that ne wolde her glorifye
To mowen suche a knyght done lyue or dye
But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwel
But for o fyne is al that euer I tel

The tyme came fro dyner for to ryse
And as hem ought, aryseh euerychone
And gone a whyle of this and that deuyse
But Pandarus brake al this speche anon
And sayd to Deiphebus, wol ye gon
If your wyl be, as I you prayde
To speken of the nedes of Creseyde

Heleyne, which that by the honde her helde
Toke fyrst the tale and sayde, go we blyue
And goodly on Creseyde she beheldo
And sayd, Ioues let hym neuer thryue
That doth you harm, a trewe him sone of lyue
And yeue me sorowe, but he shal it rue
If that I may, and al folke be true

Tel thou thy mers tale (qd Deiphebus)
To Pandarus, for thou canste best it tel
My lordes and my ladyes, it stant thus
What shulde I longer (qd he) do you dwel
He longe hem out a proces lyke a bel
Upon her for, that right Polyphete
So heynous, that men might on it spete

Answerde of this eche worse of hem to other
And Polyphete they gonnen thus to warien
In honged be suche one, were he my brother
And so be shal, for if me may nought warien
What shulde I longer in this tale tarien
Playnely eche al at ones they her highten
To ben her frende, in al that euer they mighte

Spake than Heleyne, and sayd Pandarus
Or auyt my lord my brother of this matt
I meane Hector, or wote it Troylus
Ha sayd ye, but wol ye me nowe here
Me thinketh thus, sith that Troylus is here
It were good, if that ye wolde assent
She tolde hym her selfe al this er she went

For he wol haue the more her greue at herte
Because so, that she a lady is
And by your wyl, I wol but in right sterte
And so you were, and that anon yuis
If that he slepe, or wol aught here of this
And in he lept, and sayde hym in his eere
God haue thy soule, bycause haue I thy here

To smylen of this gan the Troylus
And Pandarus without tokenyng
Out went anon to Heleyne and Deiphebus
And sayd hem, so there be no tarying
Me more preste, he wol wel that ye bringe
Creseyde my lady, that is here
And as he may endure, he wol her here

But wel ye wote, the chambre is but lyte
And so we folke may lightly make it warme

Rowe

Nowe loketh ye, for I wol haue no wyte
To bringe in preasse, ȳ might don him harme
Or hym diseasen, for my better arme
Yet were it ber the bydde tyt ofte soonis
Nowe loke ye that knowen what to don is

I say for me best is, as I can knowe
That no wight in ne wende, but ye twey
But it were I, for I can in a throwe
Reherse her case, vnlyke that she can sey
And after this she may ones hym prey
To ben good lorde in short, & take her lene
This may not mokel of hys ese hym teene

And eke for she is straunge, he wol forbere
His case, whiche that hym dare nat for you
Ese other thyng that toucheth nat to her
He wol wel, I wote it wel right nowe
That secrete is, and for the townes prowe
And they that knewe nothyng of this entente
Wythowte more, to Troylus in they wente

Eclerne in al her goodly softe wyse
Gan hym salue, and womanly to play
And sayd ywis, ye mote algate aryse
Nowe fayre brother be al bold I pray
And gan her armc right ouer his sholder lay
And hym with al her wit to recomforte
As she beste couthe, she gan hym to disporte

So after this (qd she) we you beseke
Mi dere brother Deiphebus and I
for loue of god, and so dothe Pandare eke
To ben good lorde & frende right hertely
Vnto Cresseyde, whiche that certaynly
Receyueth wrong, as wot wel here Pandare
That can her case wel her than I declare

This Pandarus gan newe his tonge whyle
And al her case reherce, and that anon
Whan it was sayd, sone after in a whyle
(Quod Troylus as sone as I may goone
I wol right fayne, with al my might den one
Dare god my trouth, her cause to sustene
Now good thrift haue ye (qd he/in ȳ quene)

(Qd Pandarus) and it roar wel be
That she may take her leaue, er that she go
(Qd god forbyd it (tho qd he)
If that she vouchsafe for to do so
And with that worde (qd Troylus ye two
Deiphebus, and my suster lefe and dere
To you haue I to shewe of a matere

To ben auysed by your rede the better
And soude (as hap was) at his beddes heed
The copye of a tretyse, and a letter
That Hector had hym sent, to aske reed
If suche a man was worthy to ben deed
Wote I naught who, but in a grysly wise
He prayde hem anone on it auyse

Deiphebus gan this letter for to beholde
In terme of great, so dyd he eyne the quene
And coming outwarde, fast it gonne beholde
Downwarde a sterre, into an herber greene
This ilke thing redden hem bet weene
And largely the mountenaunce of an houre
They gonne on it to reden and to poure

Nowe let hem rede, and turne we anone
To Pandarus, that gan ful softe prie
That al was wel, and out he gan to gon
Into the great chambre, and that in hye
And sayd, god saue al this compayne
Come nere myn, my lady quene Eelayne
Abydeth you, and eke my lordes tweyne

Lyst, take with you your nece Antigone
Or whom you lyst, or no force hardely
The lasse preasse ther bet, come forth with me
And loke that ye thonken hendely
Hem al thre, and when ye may goodly
Your tyme se, taketh of hem your leue
Lete we to longe hys wordes hym be reue

Al vnwarne of Pandarus entente
(Quod he Cresseyde go we hyde here
And atte nexte atame, inwarde to hym she wente
Iustyng wel her wordes and her chere
And Pandarus, in ernest wel manere
Sayd, al folke for goddes loue I pray
Stynteth right here, and softely you play

Auyseth you what folke ben here within
And in what plyte our is, god hem amende
And inwarde thus ful softely he gynne
Nece I conjure, and bigynne you defende
On his halfe, which that deyde vs a fende
And in the vertue of corpus thrynus
Sole nat this man, ȳ hath for you thus pyne

Eye on the dwel, thynke which one he is
And in what plyte he lyethe, come of anone
Thynke al suche sorowe yde but lost it nys
& that wol ye bothe sayne, whan ye ben one
Specially, there yet denyeth none

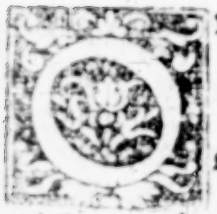
Upon

Upon you two, come of nowe if ye comme
While folke is blent, lo, al the cluue is wonne

Intiterynge and pursute, and delayes
The folke deuyne, at weggyng of a stree
And though ye wolde han after mery dayes
Than dare ye nat, and why? for the and the
Spake suche a worde, thus loked he and he
Lest tyme be loste, I dare nat with you dele
Come of therfore, and bringeth him to hele

But nowe to you, ye louers that ben here
Was Troylus nat in a cankedorre
That lay, & might the whisprynge of hē here
And thought o lord, rist now reneth my sorr
Fully to dye, or haue anone comforte
And was the first tyme he shulde her pray
Of loue, O mighty god, what shal he say.

¶ Explicit liber secundus.



Blisful lyght, of whiche the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thyrde heuen fayre
O sonnes lefe, O Joues doughter dere
Plesaunce of loue, O goodly debonayre
In gentle hertes aye redy to repayre
O very cause of heale and of gladnesse
Yherved be thy might and thy goodnesse

In heuen and hel, in erth, and salte see
Is felte thy might, if that I wel discerne
As man, bryd, fyshe, herde, and grene tre
They fele in tymes with vapour eterne
God loueth, & to loue wol naught werne
And in thys worlde no lynes creature
Withouten loue is worth, or may endure

Ye Joues first, to thylke accordes glade
Through whiche ỹ thynges lyuen all, and be
Comenden, and amorous hem made
On mortal thyng, and as you lyst aye ye
Yeue hem in loue, ease, or aduersyte
And in a thousande formes downe hem sente
For loue in erth, & whom you lyst he hente

Ye fiers Mars apeasen of hys ire
And as you lyst, ye makeu hertes digne
Algates hem that ye wol set a fyre
They dreden shame, and vices they resigne
Ye don hem curteys be, fresh, and benygne
And hye or lowe, after a wight entendeth
The loyes that he hath, your might it sendeth

Ye holden reigne and house in vnite
Ye sothfast cause of frendshyp ben also
Ye knowen al thylke coucred qualyte
Of thynges, whiche that folke wondren so
Whan they can nat construe how it may go
Why loueth hym, or why he loueth here
Is why this fish, & nat that cometh to were

Ye folke alawe haue set in vniuerse
And this knowe I by hem that louers be
That who so striueth wt̄ you hath the werse
Nowe lady bright, for thy benignyte
At reuerence of hem that seruen the
Whole clerke I am, so techeth me deuyse
Some loye of that is felte in thy seruyce

Ye, in my naked herte sentemente
Inbylde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse
Caliope, thy voyce be nowe present
For nowe is nede, freel thou nat my distresse
Howe I more tel anonright the gladnesse
Of Troylus, to Venus heryinge
To whiche who nede hath, god him bring.

¶ Incipit liber tercius.

In al this meane whyle Troylus
Recordyng his lesson in thys manere
Wakey thought he be, thus wol I say and thus
Thus wol I playne vnto my lady dere
That worde is good, & this shal be my chere
This wyl I nat forbeten in no wyse
God leue hym werken as he can deuyse

And lorde so that his hert gan to quappe
Herryng her come, and shorr for to syke
And Pandarus that ledde her by the lappe
Came nere, and gan in at the curteyn pyke
And sayd, god do bote on al syke
Se who is here, you comen to bysyte
Lo, here is she that is your dethe to wyte

Therwith it semed as he wept almoste
A, a, (qd̄ Troylus) so routhfully
Where me by wo, O mighty god thou woste
Who is al there, I se nat trewely

Sir (quod Creseyde) it is Pandare and I
Ye swete herte alas, I may nat rise
To knele, and do you honour in some wyse

And dressed him vpwarde, and she right tho
Gan bothe her hondes softe vpon him ley
O for the loue of god, do ye not so
To me (quod she) ey what is this to sey
Sir, comen am I to you for causes twey
First you to thonke, and of your lordshyp eke
Contynuaunce I wolde you beseke

This Troylus that herde his lady pray
Of lordshyp, him wore nother quicke ne deed
Ne myght a worde for shame to it say
Although men shulden smyten of his heed
But lorde so he wore sodaynlyche reed
And sir, his lesson that he wende conne
To prayen her, is throughout his wyt yronne

Creseyde al this aspyde wel ynough
For she was wise, & loued him neuer the lasse
Al nere he in al aperte, or made it tough
Or was to bolde, to synge a foole a masse
But whan his shame gan somwhat to passe
His resons, as I may my rymes holde
I wol you tell, as techen bokes olde

In chaūged voice, right for his very drede
Which voice eke quoke, & therto his manere
Goodly abaght, and now his hewes rede
Now pale, vnto Creseyde his lady dere
With loke down cast, & humble ful of chere
Lo, the alderfirst worde that him astarte
Was thyse, mercy, mercy swete herte

And stinte a whyle, & whā he myght out brig
The nexte worde was, god wore for I haue
As fayrhfully as I haue had konnyng
Ben yours al, god so my soule saue
And shal, tyl þ I woful wight be graue
And though I dare ne can vnto you playne
Iwys I suffre not the lasse payne

Thus much as now, ah, womanlyche wyfe
I may out bring, and if this you displese
That shal I wreke vpon myn owne lyfe
Right sone I trowe, and do your herte an ese
Yf with my deth, your herte may apese
But sens that ye han herde me somwhat sey
Now reche I neuer how sone þ I dey

Therwith his manly sorowe to beholde
It might haue made an herte of stone to rewe
And Pandare wepte as he to water wolde
And poked euer his nece newe and newe
And sayde, wo begon ben hertes trewe
For loue of god, make of this thyng an ende
Or slee vs both at ones, er that ye wende

I, what (q̄) she be god & by my trouthe
I not nat what ye wolde that I sey
Ey, what (q̄) he that ye haue on him routhe
For goddes loue, and doth him nat dey
Now than thus (q̄) she I wolde him prey
To telle me the fyne of his entente
Yet wille I neuer wel what that he mēte

What that I meane, O swete herte dere
(Q̄ Troylus o goodly fresshe free
That with the stremes of your eyen clere
Ye wolden somtyme frendly on me se
And than agreen that I may ben he
Without vtraunche of vyce, or any vyle
In trouthe alway, to do you my lyfe while

As to my lady right, and chefe resorte
With al my wit and al my dylygence
And to haue right as you list me conforte
Vnder your yerde egall to myn offence
As derth, yf that I breke your defence
And that ye deigne me so muche honoure
Ye to cōmaunden aught in any houre

And I to ben your very humble trewe
Secrete, and in my paynes pacyent
And euer to dyen freshly newe
To serue, and to ben are ylyke diligent
And with good herte, al holly your talente
Receyuen wel, how sore that me smerte
Lo, this meane I, myne owne swete herte

(Q̄ Pandarus) to here an harde requyr
And resonable, a lady for to werne
Now nece myne, by Mahoun Ioues fyr
Were I a god, ye shulde serue as yerne
That herden wel this man wol nothyng yerne
But your honour, & sen him almost sterue
And ben so lorde to suffre him you to serue

With that she gan her eyen on him caste
Ful easely, and ful debonairly
Anoyng her, and tho not to fast
With neuer a worde, but sayd him softely
Pyne I honour sake, I wol wel trewly
And in suche forme, as I can moste deuyse

Receyuen him fully to my seruyce

Beseechyng him for goddes loue, that he
Wolde in honour of trouthe and gentylesse
As I wel meane, eke meanen wel to me
And myne honour, with wyt and besinesse
Dye kepe, and if I may done him gladnesse
From hence forth, ioys I nyl not fayne
Now bethe al hole, no lenger pe ne playne

But natheless, this warne I you (qõ he)
Kynges sonne although ye be ywis
Ye shal no more haue souerayne
Of me in loue, than right in that case is
Ne nyl forbeare if that ye done amys
To wrathe you, and whyle that ye me serue
Cherysshen you, right after that ye deserue

And shortly dere herte, and al my knyght
Beth glad, and drawe th you to lustynesse
And I shal truely, with al my ful myght
Your better turnen al to sweetenesse
Yf I be she, that may do you gladnesse
For euery wo ye shal recouer a blysse
And him in armes toke, and gan him kysse

Fyl Pandarus on knees, and vp his eyen
To heuen threwe, and held his hondes bye
Immortal god (qõ he) that mayest not dyen
Cupide I meane, of this mayste glorifye
And Venus, thou mayste maken melodye
Withouten honde, me semeth that in towne
For this myracle ych here echo bell sowne

But ho, no more nowe of this matere
For why? this folke wol comen vp anone
That haue the letter redde, lo I hem here
But I conjure the Cresseyde, and one
And two, thou Troylus whã thou maist gon
That at myne house ye ben at my warnyng
For I ful wel shal shapen your commyng

And easeth there your hertes right ynough
And let se which of you shal beare the bell
To speke of loue aryght, & therwith he lough
For there haue I a leyser for to tell
(Quod Troylus) how longe shal I dwell
Er this be done (qõ he, whan ꝑ mayst ryse
This thing shal be right as you lyst deuyse

Wyth that Helenye, and also Delphebus
Tho comen vpward, right at the stayres ende
And lorde so tho gan grouen Troylus
His brother and his suster for to blende
(Qõ Pandarus) it tyme is that we wende
Take nece myn your leaue at al thre
And let hem speake, & cometh forthe with me

She toke her leaue at hem ful thriftely
As she wel coulde, & they her reuerence
Unto the ful dydden hardely
And wonder wel spraken in her absence
Of her, in prayseyng of her excellence
Her gouernaunce, her wyt, and her manere
Comendeden, that it ioye was to here

Now let her wende vnto her owne place
And turne we to Troylus agayne
That gan ful lyghtly of the letter pace
That Delphebus had in the gardyn seyne
And of Helenye and him he wolde feyne
Delyuered ben, and sayd that him lesse
To slepe, and after tales haue a resse

Helenye him kyste, and toke her leue blyue
Delphebus eke, and home went euery wight
And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryue
To Troylus tho came, as lyne tyght
And on a pallet, al that glad nyght
By Troylus he lay, with mery chere
To tale, & wel was hem they were yfere

Whã euery wight was boyded, but they two
And al the doores weren fast yshette
To tel in shorte, without wordes mo
This Pandarus, without any lette
Up rose, and on his beddes syde him sette
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troylus, as I shal you deuyse

Myne alderleueste lorde, and brother dere
God wot & thou, that it sate me so sore
Whan I the sawe so languysshyng to here
For loue of which thy wo wore alway more
That I with al my might, and al my lore
Haue euer sythen done my besynesse
To bryngе the to ioye out of distresse

And haue it brought to such plyte as ꝑ wost
So ꝑ through me thou stondest now in way
To fare wel, I say it for no bost
And wost thou why, but shame it is to say
For the haue I begon a gamen play
Which that I neuer done shal ete for other
Al tho he were a thousãde folde my brother

That

That is to say, for the am I becomen
Betwyxen game and ernest, suche a mene
As maken women vnto men to comen
Al say I nat, thou woste wel what I mene
For the haue I my nece, of vyces clene
So fully made thy gentylesse tryst
That al shal den, right as thy selfe lyst

But god, that al wotteth take I to wytnesse
That neuer I this for courtyse wrought
But onely for to abredge that distresse
For which wel nye ꝑ dydest, as me thought
But good brother, do now as the ought
For goddes loue, and kepe her out of blame
Sens ꝑ art wyse, & saue alway her name

For wel thou woste, the name as yet of her
Amõges ꝑ people, as (who saith) halowed is
For that man is vnbore I dare wel swere
That euer wyst that she dyd amys
But wo is me, that I that cause al this
May thynken that she is my nece dere
And I her eme, and traytour eke yfere

And were it wiste, that I through myn engyn
Had in myn nece yput this fantasye
To done thy lust, and holly to be thyn
Why al the worlde wolde vpon it crye
And say, that I the worste trechetrye
Dyd in this case, that euer was begonne
And she fordone, & thou right nought ywonne

Wherfore er I wol ferther gone or paas
Yet efte I the beseche, and fully say
That priuete go with vs in this caas
That is to sayne, that thou vs neuer wray
And be not wrothe, though I the ofte pray
To holden secre suche an hygh matere
For skylful is (thou woste wel) my prayere

And thinke, what wo there hath ben yd er this
For makyng of auaunces, as men rede
And what myschaunce in this worlde yet is
Fro day to day, right for that wicked dede
For whiche the se wise clerkes that ben dede
Haue euer this prouerbed to vs vonge
That the first vertue is to kepe the tonge

And nere it that I wylne as nowe abredge
Diffusyon of speche, I coulde almost
A thousande olde stories the aledge
Of women lost, through falsse and fooles bost
Prouerbes canste thy selfe vnowe, & wost
Ayenst that vyce for to ben a blabbe
Al sayd men sothe, as often as they gabbe

O tonge alas, so often here before
Hast ꝑ made many a lady bright of hewe
Sayd, welaway the day that I was borne
And many a maydens sorowe for to newe
And for the more parte al is untrewe
That men of relye, & it were broust to preue
Of kynde, none auaunt our is to leue

Auaunt our and a lyer, al is one
As thus. I pose a woman graunt me
Her loue, and sayth that other wol be none
And I am swome to holden it secre
And after I tel it two or thre
I wys I am auaunt our at the leest
And lyer eke, for I breke my beheest

Now lobe than, if they be not to blame
Such maner folk, what shal I clepe hit what
That hem auaunte of women, and hir name
That yet behyght hem neuer this ne that
Ne knowe hem more than myne olde hat
No wonder is, so god me sende bete
Though women deden vs men to dele

I say not this for no mistrust of non
Ne for no wyse men, but for fooles arme
And for the harme that in the worlde is nowe
As wel for folye ofte, as for malice
For wel wote I, in wyse folke that were
No woman dredeth, if she be wel auysed
For wyse ben by fooles harme chastised

But now to purpose, leue brother dere
Haue al this thing ꝑ I haue sayde in myn ende
And kepe the close, and be now of good chere
For al thy dares thou shalt me rede fynde
I shal thy proces set in suche a kynde
And god to forne, that it shal the suffyse
For it shal be, right as thou wolte deuyse

For wel I wote, thou meanest wel parde
Therfore I dare this fully vndertake
Thou woste eke, what thy lady graunted the
And day is set the chartres to make
Haue now good nyght, I may no leger wake
And pyd for me, syth thou art now ve in blysse
That god the sende derthe, or soone lysse

Who might tellen halfe the ioye or feest
Which that the soule of Troylus tho felte
Heryng the tretee of Pandarus beheest

His olde wo, that made his herte swelle
Gan tho for love wasten, and to melte
And al the rychesse of his sygnes sote
It ones ded, he fette of hem no mote

But right so as these boltes, and these hayles
That han in winter ded ben and hay
Reuesten hem in grene, whan that May is
Whan euery lusty lyketh to play
Right in that selfe wyse, for to say
More sodaynly his herte full of love
That gladder was ther neuer man in Troye

And gan his loke on Pandarus vp caste
Ful soberly, and frendly on to se
And sayd, frende, in April the laste
As wel thou wost, if it remembre the
How nygh the deth for wo thou fonnde me
And how thou dyddest al thy best me selfe
To know of me the cause of my distresse

Thou wost how longe I it forbare to say
To the, that art the man that I best trust
And peril none was it to the to bewray
Ther-with I wel, but tel me if the lyste
Syth I so lothe was, that thy selfe it wyste
How durste I mo rehers of this matere
That quake now, and no wight may be here

But nathelesse, by that god I the swere
That as him lyst may al this world gouerne
And-if I lye, Achylles with his spere
Myne herte cleue, al were my lyfe eterne
As I am mortal, if I late or yerne
Wolde it bewray, or durst, or shulde conne
For al the good that god made vnder sonne

That rather dye I wolde, and determyne
As thynketh me now, stocked in prison
In wretchednesse, in fetter, and in vermyne
Captyfe to cruel kyng Agamenon
And this in al the temples of this toune
Vpon the goddes al, I wol the swere
To morow day, if that the lyketh here

And that thou hast so moch thon for me
That I ne may it neuer more deserue
This knowe I wel, al might I nowe for the
A thousande tymes on a morowe sterue
I can no more, but that I wol the serue
Right as thy slaue, whether so thou wende
Forever more, vnto my lyues ende

But here with al myn herte I the beseche
That neuer in me thou deme suche foly
As I shal layne, me thought by thy speche
That this which thou me dorst for Spayne
I shulde werne it were a baudrye
I am not woode, al if I seude be
It is not so, that wot I wel parde

But he that goth for golde, or for richesse
On such messages, cal him what ye lyste
And this that thou dorst, cal it gentylnesse
Compassyon, and frendlyhyp, and tryst
Departe it so, for wyde where is wryte
How that there is dyuersite requyred
Bytwixen thinges lyke, as I haue lered

And that thou know I thinke not ne wene
That this seruice a shame be or tape
I haue my fayre fayser Polexene
Cassandre, Helayne, or any of the frape
Be she neuer so fayre, or wel yshape
Crime, whiche thou wrate of euery chone
To haue for thyne, and let me than alone

But syth thou hast bone me this seruice
Yet lyke to saue, and for non hope of mede
Do for the loue of god, this grete empryse
Parfourme it out, none is the moste nede
For bygh and lowe, withouten any drede
I wol al way thyne helpes al hyre
Haue now good nyght, and let vs both slepe

Thus helde hem eche of other wel apayde
That al the world ne might it hem amende
And on the morowe whan they were arayde
Eche to his owne nedes gan entende
But Troylus, though as the fyre he brende
For sharpe desyre of hope, and of pleasaunce
Ne lost for-gate his good gouernaunce

Ne in him selfe, with mAbode gan restreyne
The rather he be, and eke enbolded bet
That al that euer to-fore to sayne
He shulde haue wyst, by worde or by manere
Al-bat that he mene, as touchyng this matere
From euery wight, as frete as is the doude
He was so wyse, and wel dyssymulen coude

And al the while which that I now deuyse
This was his lyfe, with al his ful myght
By day he was in Martes hy the seruice
That is to sayne, in armes as a knyght
And for the more parte the longe nyght

pe

He lay and thought how that he might serue,
His lady best, her thanke for to deserue

Yet I not swerare, although he lay softe
That in his thoughte nas somwhat diffesed
Pe that he turned on his pyllowes ofte
And wolde of that him myssed haue be eased
But in such case, men be not alway pleased
For naught I wot, no more than was he
That can I deme of possibylyte

But certayne is, to purpose for to go
That in this while, as writen is in gesse
He sawe his lady sourtyme, and also
She with him spake, whan ꝑ she durst a lesse
And by her both aurse, as was the best
Apercieden ful warely in this wede
So as they durst, how they wold procede

But it was spoken in so sobre a wyse
In suche an arte alway, and in suche tese
Left any might be wrmen or deuyse
Wold of hem two or to it lay an ese
That al this world so lefe to hem ne were
As that Cupide wolde hem grace sende
To maken of her speche right an ende

But thilke wyel that they spake or thought
His wyse gost toke ay of all suche hede
If ought her pe wyste what she thought
Without wordes, so that it was no nede
To bid him aught to don, or aught forbede
For which he thought ꝑ long, al come it late
Ere wyse had opened her the gate

And bisily of this procede for to pace
So wel his werke and wordes he besette
That he ful sone in his ladyes grace
Euery thousande tymes er the lette
Pe thonked god the euer with him mette
So couthe he him gouerne in suche seruyse
That al the worlde ne myght it bet deuyse

For he founde him so discrete in all
So secrete, and of suche obeysaunce
That wel the lefe he was to her a wall
Of steele, and thilke of euery displesaunce
That to hen in his good gouernaunce
So wyse he was, she was nomore afrayd
I meane as ferre as aught hen required

And pandarus to quicke alwaye the fyre
Was euer ylyke prest and bysigene
To ease his frende was set al his desyre
He thone ere on, he to and fro was sent
The letters bare whan Troylus was absent
That neuer man, as in his frendes nede
He bare him bet than he, withouten drede

But nowe paraunture some man wolde wene
That euery worde or sonde, loke or chere
Of Troylus, that I reherse in thilke
In al this while, unto his lady here
I trowe it were a longe thing for to here
Or of what ought ꝑ came in suche disioyne
His wordes al, or euery loke to poynte

For sothe I haue not herde it told er this
In storie none, ne no man here I wene
And though I wold, I couthe not wis
For there was some epistel hem betwene
That wold as fayth men amende or clene
Ere halfe this boke, of which bi no wise
How couthe I than a lyne of it endyte

But to the great effecte, than for I thinke
That nothing in conclude and in somme
This ilke two, Creisse and Troylus
As I haue tolde, and written eke fynde
Sone onely often might ther not wynne
For eyther haue her speches told
That it bet sytt, right as I shal you tell

That pandarus, that euer did his myght
Night for the fyne that I shal speke of here
As for to bringen to his hous some night
His faire neece, and Troylus were
As here as ay lefer al this bright manere
Touching her love, were at ꝑ ful be sounde
Had out of doute ay vnto it sounde

For be which great deliberacion
Had euery thing that therto might auayle
Forsene and put in execucion
And nother lefte for colde ne for trauayle
Come it hem yvell, hem thinke no thing fayle
And for to hen in aught afrayd there
That wrthe be wel an impossible were

Nedeleste it clere was in the wynde
Of euery eye, and euery lef gaine
Glowe al is wel, for al the world is blynde
In this matere, both stemed and tame
This cymbel is al redy vp to frame
Pis lacketh naught, but that we weren wold
A certayne houre, in which he comen shulde

And Troylus, that al this purueyaunce
Knew at the ful, and wayted on it aye
And here vpon eke made great ordynaunce
And founde his cause, a therwith his aray
Yf that he were myssed nyght or day
There while he was aboute this seruyce
That he was gone to done his sacrifyce

And musᵗ at suche a temple alone wake
Answered of Apollo for to be
And first to sene the holy laurer quake
Er that Apollo spake out of the tree
To tel him nert whan grekes shuld flye
And for thy let him no man, god forbede
But praye Apollo helpe in this nede

Now is there lytel more for to done
But Pandare vp, and shortly for to sayne
Right sone vpon the chaungynge of the moone
Whan lightelesse is ꝑ world a nyght or twaine
And that the welken shope him for to rayne
He streyght a mozowe vnto his nece wente
Ye haue wel herde the fyne of his entente

Whan he was comen, he gan anon to playe
As he was wont, and of him selfe to tape
And fynally he swore, and gan her saye
By this and that, she shuld him not escape
No lenger done him after her to gape
But certaynly, she musᵗ by her leue
Come souper vn his house with him at eue

At which she lough, a gan her first excuse
And sayde nay ther-to, how shuld I gone
Let be (qꝺ he) ne stonde not thus to muse
This more be don, ye shal come there anone
So at the last, herof they fel at one
Or els fast he swore her in her ere
He nolde neuer comen there she were

Sone after this, she to him gan rowne
And asked him if Troylus were there
He swore her nay, for he was out of towne
And sayd, nece: I pose that he were there
You durst neuer haue the more feere
For rather than men might him there aspye
We were leuer a thousande folde to dye

Naught lyst myne auctour fully to declare
What that she thought, whan he said so
That Troylus was out of towne yfare
And if he sayd therof soth or no
But that wythouten awayte with him to go
She graunted him, sithe he her that besought
And as his nece obeyed as her ought

But natheless, yet gan she him beseche
(Although with him to gone it was no feere)
For to beware of goyssche peoples speche
That diuersen thynges, which ꝑ neuer were
And wel auyse him whom he brought there
And sayd him eke, sens I must on vous tryst
Loke al be wel, and do nowe as you lyst

He swore her this, by stockes and by stones
And by the goddes that in heuen dwell
Or els were him leuer soule and bones
With Pluto kyng, as depe ben in hell
As Cantalus, what shulde I more tel
Whan al was wel, he rose and toke his leue
And she to souper came whan it was eue

With a certayne of her owne men
And with her fayre nece Antigone
And other of her women nyne or ten
But who was glad nowe, who as trowe ye
But Troylus, that stode and myght it se
Throughout a lytel wyndowe in a stewe
Ther he beshet, sith myd nyght was in mewe

Anwist of euery wight, but of Pandare
But to the poynt, nowe whan ꝑ she was come
With al ioye, and al frendes fare
Her eme anon in armes hath her nome
And than to the souper al and some
Whan ryme was, ful softe they him set
God wot there was no deynte ferre to fet

And after souper gonnen they to ryse
As ese wel, with herte fresshe and glade
And wel was him that coude best deuyse
To lyken her, or that her laughen made
He songe, she playde, he tolde a tale of Wade
But at the last, as euery thing hath ende
She toke her leaue, and nedes wolde wende

But o fortune, executrice of wyerdes
O influences of these heuens hye
Soth is, that vnder god ye ben our hierdes
Though to vs beestes, ben the causes wyse
This mene I now, for she gan homward hye
But execute was al besyde her leue
At the goddes wyl, for whiche she musᵗ bleue

The bryte moone with her hornes pale
Saturnus ꝑ Ioue, in Cancro ioyned were
That

That suche a rayne from heuen gan auayle
That euery maner woman that was there
Had of that smoky rayne a very feere
At which Pandare tho lough, & sayd thenne
Nowe were it tyme a lady to gone henne

But good nece, if I might euer please
You any thyng, than pray I you (quod he)
To don myn hert as nowe so great an ease
As for to dwel here al thys night with me
For why this is your owne house parde
For by my trouthe, I say it nat in game
To wende as nowe, it were to me a shame

Creseyde, which that coulde as muche good
As halfe a worlde, toke hede of hys prayere
And sens it rayned, and al was in a flode
She thought, as good chepe may I dwel here
And graunt it gladly with a frendes chere
And haue a thoke, as gruche I than abyde
For home to gon it may nat wel betyde

I wol (quod she) myn vncle liefe and dere
Sens that you lyste, it skyl is to be so
I am right glad with you to dwellen here
I sayd but ageine I wolde go
This graunt mercy nece (quod he tho
Were it againe or no, sothe to tel
Nowe am I glad, sens that you list to dwel

Thus al is wel, but tho began aryght
The newe ioy, and al the fest agayne
But Pandarus, it goodly had he myght
He wolde haue hyed her to bedde fayne
And sayd, loorde this is an huge rayn
This were a wether for to sleepen in
And that I rede vs soone to begyn

And neece, wote ye where I wol you lay
For that we shul nat lyggen ferre a sonder
And for ye neither shullen, dare I say
Here noyse of rayne, ne of thonder
By god right myn closet yonder
And I wol in that litel house alone
Sen wardayn of your women euerychone

And in this myddle chambre that ye se
Shal your women slepen, wel and sofre
And there I sayd, shal your seluen be
And if ye lyggen wel to nyght, come ofte
And careth not what wether is a lofte
The wyne anone, and whan so you leste
So we to slepe, I trowe is be the beste

There nys no more, but here after sone
They vorde, dronke, & trauers drawe anone
Gan euery wight that had nought to done
Voyde in the place, out of the chambre gone
And euer more so fersely gan it rone
And blewe therwith so wonderlyche loude
That wel nigh no man heren other coulde

Tho Pandarus her eme, right as him ought
With women, suche as were her most a lotte
Ful glad vnto her bedes side her brought
And toke his leaue, and gan fro thence loute
And sayd, here at this closet doore ful out
Right ouer thwart your women liggen al
That whom ye lyste of hem, ye may wel cal

So whan that she was in the closet faste
And al her women forth by ordinaunce
I bidde wetten, there as I haue taste
There nas no more to skippen nor to praute
But boden go to bedde with mischaunce
If any wight sterying were any where
And let hem slepen, that a bedde were

But Pandarus, ful wel couthe ethe and bile
The olde daunce, and euery point therto
What that he saw that al thing was wel
He thought he wolde vpon his werke go
and gan the fyre more dote al fote vpon
As slyl as a stone, without longer lette
By Troylus adowne right he by him sette

And shortly to the poynte right for to gone
Of al this werke he tolde him worde & ende
And sayd, make the redy right anone
For thou shalt in to bedde lyke vnder
Nowe blyssful Venus thou me grace sende
(Quod Troylus) for neuer yet vnto dede
Had I er nowe, ne halfendele the drede

(Quod Pandarus) ne drede the neuer a dele
For it shal be right as thou wolt deuise
So thriue I, this night shal I make it wele
Or casten al the gruel in the fyre
yet blyssful Venus this night thou me enspire
(Quod Troylus as wis as I the serue
And euer bet and bet shal yt I serue

And if I had, O Venus ful of myrthe
Aspectes badde of Mars, or of Saturne
Or thou combuste, or let were in my byrthe
Thy father pray, al thylke harme disturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayen may turne

For loue of him thou loudest in the shawe
I meane Adon, ꝑ with the boze was slawe

Ioue eke, for the loue of fayre Europe
The which in forme of a bulle away thou fet
Now helpe, o Mars, thou in thy blody cope
For loue of Cipria, thou me naught ne let
O Phebus, this whe Daphne thet selue shet
Under the barke, a Laurer wexe for drede
Yet for her loue, o helpe nowe at this nede

Mercurie, for the loue of her eke
For which Pallas was wꝓ Iglauros wrothe
Nowe helpe, and eke Diane I the beseke
That this stage be nat to the lothe
O farall fulfren, whiche of any clothe
Ne shapen was, iny bosyne me sponne
So helpeth to thys werke that is begonne

(Quꝺ Pandarus) ꝓ wretched mouses hert
Art thou agast so that the wol the byte
Why, do on thys furred cloke vpꝓ thy sherte
And folowe me, for I wol haue the wyte
Our bydde, and er me gon before ye alyte
And with that he gan vnbone a trappe
And Troylus he brought in by the lappe

The sterne wynde so loude gan to route
That no wight other noyse might here
And they that larum at the doze without
Full sikerly they slepen al yfere
And Pandarus, with ful sobre chere
Goth to the doze anon without lette
There as they lay, and softely it shette

And as he came ayenward be priuely
His herte aquoke, ꝑ aferth, wꝓ gothe there
Ay herre nere qꝺ he tham I
Se wonderth nor, ne haue of it no fere
And nere he came, and sayde hem in her ere
No wꝓde for loue of god I you beseche
Let no wight arise, ꝑ heren of our speche

Quat, which way be ye comen be me bidde,
(Quꝺ he and holde bi myne of hem al
Here at this secret trappe doze qꝺ he
(Quꝺ he Creseyde let me some wight cal
Eygh, god forbyd that it shulde be so tal
(Quꝺ Pandarus that ye suche folye wrought
They might brennen thig they neuer er thought

It is nat good a sleping honde to make
Neyther a wight a cause for to wrynne
Your women slepen al, I vndertake
So that for hem the house men myght renne
And slepen wollen ryl the sonne shyne
And when my tale is brought to an ende
Unwist ryght as I came, so wol I wende

Nowe nece myne, ye shul wel vnderstonde
(Quod he so as ye women demen al
That for to holde in loue a man in honde
And hym her lefe and dere her cal
And maken hym an howue aboue a cal
I mene, as loue an other in this mene whyle
Whe doth her selfe a shame, and hym a gyle

Nowe wherby that I tel you al this
Ye were your selfe, as wel as any wight
Nowe that your loue al fully graunted is
To Troylus, the worthyest wyght
Ine of the worlde, a therto trouth vplyght
That but it were on hym alonge, ye nolde
Him neuer fallen, whyle ye liuen tholde

Nowe stonte it thus, that sith I fro you wente
This Troylus, right playnly for to seyne
Is through a gutter by a priuy mente
Into my chambre come in al this reyne
Unwist of eyther maner wight certayne
And of my selfe, as wisely haue I ioye
And by the fayth I owe to Pallam of Troye

And he is come in suche payne and disese
That but he be al fully wroche by this
He telleth me, nere fal in no woodnesse
Your selfe best kepe, and saue his lyf in this
For sayth him tolde is of a stounde of his
Now ꝑ ye shuld louen one, that hight Troylus
For sorow of which this night shalbe his last

Creseyde, which that al this wonder herde
Can fo baynly aboute her herte colde
And with a sighe she sorowfully answerde
Alas, I wende wel so tales tolde
Her dere herte wolde me nat holde
So lightly fause, alas conceytes wronge
Quat yaten they now fine I so longe

Iesse alas, and falsen Troylus
I knowe him not, qꝺ he (god helpe me so qꝺ he)
Alas, what wicked spirite tolde him this
Nowe certes eme, to moche me and I him is
I shal therof as full excusen me
As euer dyd woman, if hym lyke
And with that worde she gan ful sore syke

O god

O god (qō the) so worldly seurnesse
Which clerkes callen false felicite
Ymedled is with many a bytternesse
Ful angurthous, than is god wote (qō the)
Condicion of veyne prosperite
For either ioyes comen nat yfere
Or ris no wight hath hem alway here

O brotyr wele of mannes ioye unstable
With what wight so thou be, or ꝑ who play
Either he wote, that thou ioy art muable
Or wote it nat, it more ben one of tway
Nowe if he wote it nat, howe may he say
That he hath very ioye and frienesse
That is of ignorannce aye in derkenesse

Nowe if he wote that ioy is transytory
As every ioye of worldly thyng more or lyve
Than every tyme, he that hath in memory
The drede of leesyng, maketh hym, that he
May in no partyre sykernesse be
And if to lese hys ioye, be sit a myte
Than semeth it, that ioy is worthe ful lyte

Wherfore I wol bestyne in this matere
That trusty for aught I can espye
Ther is no very wele in this worlde here
But o thou wicked serpent ialousye
Thou mysbeleued, and envyous folye
Why hast thou Troylus made to me untrue
That never yet agylte, that I wyste

O pandarus thys fallen is thys caas
O by uncle myn qō the who colde him this
Why doth my here bleue thus, alas
Ye wote, ye nece myn qō he, what is
I hope al shal be wel, that is amis
For ye may qwreche al this, if that you leste
And both right so, I holde it for the beste

So shal I do to morowe, wyst qō the
And god reforme, so that it shal suffyce
To morowe alas, that were fayre qō he
Nay nay, it may nat stonden in thys wyse
Fornece myne, this wote ye clerkes wyse
That perel is with drecchyng in dawe
Ney, such abodes ben nat worthe an hawe

Nece, al thyng hath tyme I dare awowe
For whan a chaunce a tyme is, or an hap
Wel more nede is, it sodaynly to crowe
Than to dispute en and aske amonges al
Howe the candle in the lanterne is fal

Ah benedicite, for al amonge that fare
The harme is done, and farwel feldefare

And nece myne, ne take it nat a greke
If that ye suffre him al night in this wo
God helpe me so, ye hab hym neuer leke
That dare I sayn, now there is but we two
But wel I wote that ye wol nat so do
Ye ben to wyse to done so great folye
To put hys lyfe al night in iopardye

Had I hym neuer lefe, by god I hope
Ye had neuer thyng so lefe, qō she
Nowe by my thrifte qō he ꝑ that be pope
For sithe ye make thys ensample of me
If iche al night wolde bleue in soiourne se
For al the treasour in the toure of troye
I bydde god, I neuer more haue ioye

Nowe loke than, if ye that ben hys love
Shulde put hys lyfe al nyght in iopardye
For nothing of nought, now be ꝑ god above
Al ne only this delay comen of folye
Or of malice, if that I shulde swere
What, playe and ye suffre hym al this yere
Ye neuer be bolde be ne gete leue

O god the fyrste wol ye done a thyng
And ye therwith shal stynte al hys bale
Haue here and bere him thys nyght swyng
For ther is nothyng might him better hele
Haue I my selfe, ne more his here aqwele
And lay my here here, that hys sorowe
Is cawsyde, that shal be sene to morowe

I wrye qō he ye hastyn wordes bakem
Ye nece myne, that ryng must haue a bone
What might deed men a lyve make
And suche a tyng trowe I that ye haue none
Delyuerance out of youre bed is gone
That sele I nowe qō he and that is rowthe
O tyme yiow, wel mayst thou curse thy slouthe

Wote ye not wel that noble and hye corage
Ne sorowyth nat, ne stynteth ese for tyre
But if a foole were in a ialous rage
I wolde fetten at his sorowe a myre
But telle him with a fewe wordes whyte
An other day, whā that I might hym fynde
But thys thyng stant al in another kynde

This is so gentyl and so tender of herte
That vn his herte he wol his sorowes wyrke

For trust wel, howe sore that hym smerte
He wol to you no talous wordes speke
And for thy nece, er that his hert breke
So speke your selfe to hym of this matere
For with a worde ye may his hert stere

Now haue I tolde what peril he is in
And his comyng vnwist is to euery wight
Ne parde harme may there be none, ne syn
I wol my selfe be with you al thys night
Ye knowe eke howe it is your owne knight
And that by right, ye muste vpon him trust
And I al prest to fetche him when you lust

This accident so pytous was to here
And eke so lyke a sothe, at prime face
And Troylus her knyght, to her so dere
His prime cōming, and the syker place
That though she dyd him as than a grace
Considred al thinges as they stode
No wonder is, sens he dyd al for goode

Cresseyde answerde, as wisely god at reste
My soule bringe, as me is for hym wo
And eme ywis, fayne wolde I don the beste
If that I a grace had for to do so
But whether that ye dwel, or for him go
I am, yf god me better mynde sende
At Dulcarnon, right at my wyttes ende

(Quod Pandarus ye nece wol ye here
Dulcarnon is called flemyng of wretches
It semeth herd, for wretches wol nought lere
For bery slouthe, or other wylful tetches
This is said by hem, þ be nat worth two fetches
But ye ben wise, & that ye han on hōde
Ays neither harde, ne skylful to withstonde

Than eme (qō she) doth here of as you lyste
But er he come, I wol vp first aryse
And for the loue of god, sens al my tryste
Is on you two, and ye beth bothe wyse
So werketh nowe, in so discrete a wyse
That I honour maye haue, and he plesaunce
For I am here, al in your gouernaunce

That is wel said (qō he) my nece dere
There good thrift on þ wyfe gentil herte
But lyggeth fyr, & taketh him right here
It nedeth nat no fether for him sterte
And eche of you caseth other sorowes smerte
For loue of god, and Venus I the herye
For sone hope I, that we shal ben merye

This Troylus ful sone on knees him sette
Ful sobrely, right by her beddes heed
And in his beste wise hys lady grette
But lorde so she wore sodaynlyche reed
Ne though men shulde smiten of her heed
She couldе nat o worde a right out bringe
So sodaynly for hys sodayne comynge

But Pandarus, that so wel couldе fete
In euery thing, to play anon began
And sayd, nece, se howe this lorde gan knele
Howe for your trouthe, se this gentil man
And with that worde, he for a quishen ran
And sayd, kneleth nowe while þ thou leste
There god your hertes bring sone at reste

Can I naught sayn, for she bad him nat ryse
If sorowe it put out of her remembraunce
Or els that she toke it in the wise
Of duetie, as for his obseruaunce
But wel fynde I, she dyd him this plesaunce
That she him kyst, al though she syked sore
And bad him sit adowne without more

(Quod Pandarus nowe wol ye wel begin
Nowe doth hym litle, good nece dere
Vpon your beddes syde, al there within
That eche of you the bet may other here
And with that worde he drew him to þ here
And toke a light, & sounde his countenaunce
As for to loke vpon an olde romaunce

Cresseyde that was Troylus lady right
And clere slode in a grounde of sykernesse
Al thought she her seruaunt & her knyght
Ne shulde none vntrouthe in her gesse
That natheles, considred hys distresse
And that lone is in cause of suche folye
Thus to him spake she of his ialousye

O hert myne, as wolde the excellence
Of loue, ayenst the whiche þ no man may
Ne ought eke goodly maken resistence
And eke bycause I felte wel and say
Your great trouth, and seruyce euery day
And þ your hert al min was, soth to sayne
This drogue me for to rewe vpon your payne

And your goodnes haue I fonden alway yet
Of whiche my dere hert, and al my knyght
I thanke it you, as ferre as I haue wit
Al can I nat as much as it were right
And I comforth my comyng and my myght

Haue,

haue, and aye shal, how sore that me smert
Ben to you trewe and hole with al myn hert

And dredelesse that shal be founden at preue
But herr myn, what al this is to sayne
Shal wel be told, so that ye nouzt you greue
Though I to you rizt on your self cõplayne
For there with meane I finally payne
That halte your hert a myne in heyuynesse
Fully to slayne, and euery wzonge redzesse

Wy good myne, not I, for why ne howe
That ielously alas, that wicked wyuere
Thus causeselesse is cropen in to you
The harme of whiche I wolde fayn deliuery
Is, that he al hole oz of hym self wuere
Shulde haue his refute in so digne a place
That Joue, him sone out of your herr race

But o thou, o auctour of nature
Is this an honour to thy dignite
That folke vngylty suffren here iniure
And who that gylty is, al quite gothe he
O were it leful for to playne of the
That vndeserued suffrest ialousye
O, that I wolde vpon the playne and crye

Eke al my wo is this, that folke nowe vsen
To sayne right thus: ye, ialousye is loue
And wolde a bushel of venym al excusen
For that a grane of loue is on it shoue
But that wote high Joue that syt aboue
If it be syker loue, hate, oz graine
And after that it ought beare hys name

But certayne is, some maner ialousye
Is excusable, more than some ywis
As whan cause is, and some suche fantasye
With pyte so wel expressed is
That it vnneth dothe oz sayth amis
But goodly drinketh vp al hys dystresse
And that excuse I for the gentylnesse

And some so ful of fury is, and dispite
That it surmounteth hys repzessyon
But herr myne, ye be nat in that plyte
That thonke I god, for which your passion
I wol nat cal it but illusyon
Of habundaunce of loue, and besy cure
That doth your herr this disese endure

Of whiche I am sozy, but nat wzoth
But for my deuoir and your hertes reste
Where so you lyste, by ozdal oz by othe
By sozte, oz in what wise so you leste
For loue of god, let preue it for the beste
And yf that I be gylty, do me dye
Alas, what might I more done oz sey

With that a fewe bright teres newe
Out of her eyen fel, and thus she seyde
Now god yf wost, in thouzt ne dede I vntrewe
To Troylus was neuer yet Cresseyde
With that her herd do wn on the bed she leyde
And with the lere it wzigte, a sighed sore
And held her pese, nat a wozd spake she more

But now helpe god, to quench al this sorowe
So hope I that he shal, for he beste may
For I haue sene of a ful myry morowe
Folowen ful oft a mery somers day
And after wynter folweth grene May
Ben sene al day, and reden eke in bookes
That after sharpe shoures ben hote stroukes

Thys Troylus, whan he her wordes herde
Haue ye no care, his myth nat telle
For it thought him no strokes of a swerde
To here oz se Cresseyde his lady wepe
But wel he felte about his herte crepe
For euery teare whiche that Creseide asterte
The crampe of deth, to straynt him by the herte

And in hys mynde he gan the time accuse
That he came there, and that he was borne
For nowe is wicke turned in to wurse
And al that labour he hath done beforne
He wende it lost, her thought he nas but lorne
O Pandarus, thought he, alas thy wyle
Seruyth of nought, so welaway the while

And therwithal he hyng adowne his hed
And fel on knees, and sozowfully he sighte
What might he sayn, he felte he nas but ded
For wzothe was he shuld his sozowes lyte
But natheless, whan that he spekyn myghte
Than said he thus, god wote yf this game
Whan al is wyst, whan am I nat to blame

Therwith the sorowe of hys herte therte
That from his eyen fel there nat a teere
And euery spirite hys vrgout in knette
So they astowred oz oppressed were
The felyng of sorowe, oz of his fere
Oz of aught els, stedde were out of towne
Adowne he fel al sodaynly in swoune

Thys

Thys was no lytel sorowe for to se
But al was husht, & Pandare vp as faste
O nece pcace, or we be lotte (qõ he)
Beth nat agaste, but certayne at laste
For this or that, he in to bedde hym cast
And sayde, O theefe, is this a mannes herte
And of he rente al to hys bare sherte

And sayd nece, but ye helpe vs nowe
Alas, your owne Troylus is lorne
Iwis so wolde I, and I wyste howe
Ful fayne (qõ he alas that I was borne
Nece, wol ye pullen out the thorne
That stycketh in hys hert (qõ Pandare)
Say al forgeue, and hym is al this fare

Ye that to me (qõ she) ful leuer were
Than al the good the sunne aboute gothe
And therwithal he swore him in hys ere
Iwis my dere hert I am nat wrothe
Haue here my trouth, & many an other othe
Nowe pese to me for it am I Creseyde
But al for naught, yet might he nat abreyde

Therwith his poulce, & paumes of his hondes
They gan to frote, & wete his tẽples twayne
And to deliuer hym fro bytter bondes
She oft hym kyste, and shortly for to sayne
Hym to awaken she dyd al her payne
And at the laste he gan his brethe to drawe
And of his swough sone after that adawe

And gan her mynde, and reason to hym take
But wonder sore he was abashed ywis
And with a sygh whan he gan her awake
He sayd, O mercy god, what thing is this
Why do ye with your selfen thus amys
(Qõ tho Creseyde is this a mannes game
What Troylus, wol ye do thus for shame

And therwithal her arme ouer him she layde
And al forgaue, and ofte tyme hym kyste
He thonked her, and to her spake and sayde
As fyl to purpose, for hys hertes reste
And she to that answerde him as her leste
And with her goodly wordes him disporte
She gan, and ofte his sorowes to comforte

(Qõ Pandarus for aught I can aspyen
This light nor I ne seruen here of naught
Lyght is nat good for sicke folkes eyen
But for the loue of god, sens ye ben brought
In this good plyte, let now non heuy thought
Ben hangyng in the hertes of you twey
And bare the candle to the chymney

Soone after this, though it no nede were
Whan she suche othes as her lyst deuyse
Had of hym take, her thought tho no frere
Ne cause eke none, to byd hym thence ryse
Yet lesse thyng than othes may suffyse
In many a case, for euery wight I gesse
That loueth wel, meaneth but gentylnesse

But in effecte she woolde wete anone
Of what man, and eke were, and why
He ialous was, sens there was cause none
And eke the signe that he toke it by
She bade hym that to tel her besyly
Or els certayne she bare hym on honde
That this was done of malyce her to fonde

Withouten more, shortly for to sayne
He must obey vnto hys ladyes heeste
And for the lasse harme he maste fayne
He sayde her, whan she was at suche a feste
She might on him haue loked at the leste
Not I nat what, al dere ynough a tryche
As he that nedes maste a cause fynde

And she answerde, sweete, al were it so
What harme was ỳ, sens I non yuil meane
For by that god that bought vs both two
In al thing is myne entent cleane
Suche argumentes ne be nat worth a beene
Wol ye the childishe ialous counterfete
Nowe were it worthy that ye were ybete

Tho Troylus gan sorowfully to syke
Lest she be wroth, him thought his hert deyde
And sayd, alas, vpon my sorowes syke
Haue mercy swete hert myne Creseyde
And if that in the wordes that I seyde
Be any wronge, I wol no more trespace
Doth what you lyst, I am al in your grace

And she answerde, of gylte misericorde
That is to sayne, that I forgeue al this
And euermore on this night you recorde
And bethe wel ware ye do no more amys
Nay dere hert myne (qõ he) ywis
And nowe (qõ she) that I haue you do smerte
Forgeue it me, myn owne swete herte
This Troylus with blisse of that supprised
Put al in goddes hande, as he that mente
Nothyng but wel, and sodaynly auysed

He

he her in armes fast to him hente
And Pandarus, with a ful good entent
Layde him to slepe, & sayde, if ye be wyse
Swenenyth not now, lest more folke aryse

What myght or may the sely larke say
Whan ỳ the sparhauke hath him in his fote
I can no more, but of these yike tway
To whom this tale sugre be or soote
Though I tarye a yere, somtyme I mote
After myne auctour tellen her gladnesse
As wel as I haue tolde her heynesse

Creseyde, whiche that felte her thus ytake
(As wryten clerkes in her bokes olde)
Right as an aspen leefe she gan to quake
Whan she him felt her in his armes folde
But Troylus al hole of cares colde
Gan thanken tho the blysful goddes seuen
Through ỳ dry paines to brig folke to heuen

This Troylus in armes gan her strayne
And sayd swete, as euer mote I gone
Nowe be ye caught, here is but we twayne
Nowe yelden you, for other boote is none
To that Creseyde answerde thus anone
Ne had I er now, my swete herte dere
Ben yolde I wis, I were nowe not here

O, soth is sayd, that healed for to be
As of a feuer, or other great sickenesse
Men must drinken, as we ofte se
Ful bytter drinke, and for to haue gladnesse
Men drinken ofte payne, and great distresse
I meane it here by, as for this auenture
That through a payn hath goude al his cure

And now swetnesse semeth more swete
That bytternesse assayed was byforne
For out of wo in blysse now we flete
Now suche they felten sens they were borne
Now is this bet, than bothe two be lorne
For loue of god, take euery woman hede
To werken thus, if it come to the nede

Creseyde al quyte from euery drede and tene
As she that tulle cause had him to tryste
Bade him suche feest, it loue was to sene
Whan she his trouth & clene entent wyste
And as aboute a tree with many a twyste
Bytrent and writhe the swete wodbynde
Can clyppe of hem in armes other wynde

And as the newe abashed nightyngale
That stynteth first, whan she begynneth syng
Whan that she heereth any heerdes tale
Or in the hedges any wight stervng
And after syker dothe her voyce out rynge
Right so Creseyde, whan her drede stente
Opened her herte, & tolde him her entente

And right as he that seeth his deth ỳ shapen
And dyen moste, in aught that he may gesse
And sodainly rescous doth him escapen
And from his deth is brought in sykernesse
For al this worlde, in suche present gladnesse
Was Troylus, and hath his lady swete
With worse happe god let vs neuer mete

Her armes smal, her streight backe & softe
Her sydes longe, flesshly, smothe, and white
He gan to stroke, & good thrifte bad ful ofte
Her snowysse throte, her brestes rounde & lite
Thus in this heuen he gan him to delite
And therwithal a thousande tymes her kisse
That what to done for ioye vnneth he wyste

Than sayd he thus, O loue, O charite
Thy mother eke, Citherea the swete
That after thy selfe next hereth be
Venus I meane, the wel willy planete
And next that, Imeneus I the grete
For neuer man was to you goddes holde
As I, which ye haue brought fro cares colde

Benigne loue, thou holy bonde of thinges
Who so wol grace, & lyst the not honouren
To his desire wol flye withouten wynges
For nolorst thou of bounte him socouren
That seruen best, and most alway labouren
Yet were al lost that dare I wel save certes
But if thy grace passed our deseртes

And for thou me ỳ lest thonke coude deserue
Of hem that nombred ben vnto thy grace
Hast holpen, there I lykely was to sterue
And me besto wed in so highe a place
That thilke bounde may no blysse pace
I can no more, but laude and reuerence
Be to thy bounte and thyne excellence

And therwithal Creseyde anon he kyst
Of which certayne she felte no disease
And thus said he, now wolde god I wyst
Myne herte swete, how I you myght please
What man, (q he) was euer thus at ease

As Iron which the fayrest, and the best
That euer I sey, deyneth her to rest

Here may men sene that mercy passeth right
The experience of that is seke in me
That am vnworthy to so swete a wight
But herte myne, of your benignite
So thinke, that though I vnworthy be
Yet more I nede amenden in some wyse
Right through the vertue of your hye seruise

And for the loue of god my lady dere
Sith he hath wrought me for I shall you ser-
As thus I meane: Wol ye be my fere (ue
To do me lyue, if that you lyst, or sterue
So teacheth me, how that I may deserue
Your thonke, so þ I through myn ignorance
Ne do not thyng that you be displesaunce

For certes fresshe womanlyche wyse
This dare I say, that trouth and dylygence
That shal ye fynden in me al my lyse
Ne I wol nat certayne bicken your defence
And yf I do, present or in absence
For loue of god, let slee me with the dede
Yf that it lyke vnto your womanhede

Ywis (quod she) myne owne herres luste
My grounde of ease, & all myne herte dere
Graunt mercy, for on that is al my trust
But let vs fal away fro this matere
For it sufficeth, this that sayde is here
And at o word, thouten repentaunce
Welcome my knyght, my peace, my sufficsaunce

Of her delyte or ioyes, one of the leste
Were impossyble to my wyt to say
But iugeth ye, that haue ben at the feste
Of suche gladnesse, if that him lyst play
I can no more, but thus these like tway
That nyght, betwyxen drede and sykernesse
Felten in loue the greate worthynesse

O blysful nyght, of hem to longe ysought
Howe blythe but hem both two thou were-
Why ne had I such frest to my souls ybought-
Ye, or the lest ioye that was there
Away thou foule daunger and thou feere
And let hem in this heuen blysse dwell
That is so hygh, that al ne can I tell

But sothe is, though I can not tellen all
As can myne auctour of his excellence
Yet haue I sayde, and god to forne shall
In euery thing al holly his sentence
And if that I, at loues reuerence
Haue any worde in eched for the best
Doth ther with al right as your seluen lest

For my wordes here, and euery parte
I speke hem all vnder correction
Of you that feling haue in loues arte
And put it all in your discretion
To encrease or make diminution
Of my langage, and that I you beseche
But now to purpose of my rather speche

These ylke two that be the in armes laste
So lothe to hem a sonder gon it were
That eche from other wenden ben bereste
Or els lo, this was her moste feere
That al thys thing but ryce dreames were
For whiche ful ofte eche of hē said, o swete
Clyppe I you thus, or els do I it mete

And lorde so he gan goodly on her se
That neuer his loke ne bleynte from her face
And sayd, o dere herte may it be
That it be sothe, that ye ben in this place
Ye her e myne, god thanke I of his grace
(Quod tho Creseyde) & therwithal him kyste
That where her spirite was, for ioy she wyste

Tho is Troylus ful ofte her eyen two
Gan for to kysse, & sayd: O eyen clere
It weren ye that wrought me suche wo
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere
Though there be mercy writte in your chere
God wote the texte ful harde is for to fynde
How coude ye, withouten bonde me bynde

Therwith he gan her fast in armes take
And wel an hundred tymes gan he syke
Not suche sorowful syghes as men make
For wo, or els whan that folke be syke
But easy syghes, suche as ben to lyke
That shewed his affection withinne
Of suche syghes coulde he not blynne

Sone after this, they spake of sondry thinges
As fyl to purpose of thys auenture
And playeng, entrechaungeden her rynges
Of whiche I can not tellen no scripture
But wel I wot, a broche of golde and asure
In whiche a rubye set was lyke an herte
Creseyde him yaue, & frache it on his sherte

Lord

Lorde trowe ye that a coueytous wretche
That blameth loue, and halte of it dispyte
That of tho pens that he can muckre & ketche
Was euer yet yeue to him suche deyte
As is in loue, in o poynt in some plyte
Nay doutlesse, for also god me saue
So parfyte ioye may no nygarde haue

They wol say yes, but lorde so they lye
Tho besy wretches ful of wo and drede
That callen loue a woodnesse of folye
But it shal fal hem, as I shal you rede
They shal forgon the white & eke the rede
And lyue in wo, ther god yeue hē mischaunce
And euery louer in his trouthe auaunce

As wolde god tho wretches, that dispyse
Scruyce of loue, had eares also longe
As had Mida, ful of couetyse
And therto dronken had as hotte and stronge
As Cresus dyd, for his affectes wronge
To teachen hem, that they ben in the vyce
And louers not, although they holde hem nice

These yike two, of whom ꝑ I you say
Whan that her herres wel assured were
Tho gonnen they to speke and to play
And eke reherce how, whan, and where
They knewe first, & euery wo or feere
That passed was, but al suche heynesse
I thonke it god, was turned to gladnesse

And euermore, whan that hem fell to speke
Of any thinge of suche a tyme agon
With kyssyng al that tale shulde breke
And fallen in to a newe ioye anon
And bydden al her myght, sens they were one
For to recouren blysse, and ben at eyse
And paysed wo with ioye counterpeyse

Reason wol not that I speke of slepe
For it acordeth not to my matere
God wote they toke of it ful lytell kepe
But lest this nyght that was to hem so dere
Al shulde in vayne escape in no manere
It was byset in ioye and besynesse
Of al that sowneth in to gentylnesse

But whan the cocke, comune astrologer
Gan on his brest to beate, and after crowe
And Lucifer, the dayes messanger
Gan for to rise, and out her beames throwe
And estward rose, to him ꝑ could it knowe
Fortuna maior, that anon Creseyde
With hert sore, to Troylus thus seyde

Myne hertes life, my trust, al my plesaunce
That I was borne alas, that me is wo
That day of vs more make discouerasnce
For tyme it is to ryse, and hence go
Or els I am lost for euer mo
O nyght alas, why nylt thou ouer vs houe
As longe as whan Alcmena lay by Ioue

O blacke nyght, as folke in bokes rede
That shapen art by god, this world to hyde
At certayne tymes, with thy derke wede
That vnder that men might in rest abyde
Wel oughtē beestes to pleyn, & folke to chyde
That there as day vs labour wold vs bryst
That thou thus fyest, & deynest vs not rest

Thou dost alas, to sodenly thyne office
Tho rakle nyght, there god maker of kynde
The for thyne hast, & thyne vnkynde vice
So fast ave to our hemysperye bynde
That neuermore vnder ꝑ grounde ꝑ wynde
For none for thou so hyest out of Troye
Haue I forgone thus hastely my ioye

This Troylus, that with tho wordes felte
As thought him tho, for pyteous distresse
The bloody teares from his hert melte
As he that yet neuer suche heynesse
Assayed had, out of so great gladnesse
Gan therwithal Creseyde his lady dere
In armes straine, & holde in louely manere

O cruel day, accuser of the ioye
That nyght & loue haue stole, & false fyne
Acursed be thy comyng in to Troye
For euery bore hath one of thy bright eyen
Envyous day, what lyst the so to spyen
What hast thou lost, why seke ꝑ this place
There god thy lyght so quenche for his grace

Alas, what haue these louers the agylte
Dispytous day, thyn be the payne of hell
For many a louer hast thou slayne, & wylte
Thy comyng in wol no where let hem dwel
What profyte thou thy lyght here for to selle
Go selle it hem that smale seales graue
We wol the not, vs nedeth no day haue

And eke the sonne Tytan gan he chyde
And sayd, O foole, wel may men the dispyse

That hast al nyght the dawyng by thy syde
And suffrest her so soone vp fro the syde
For to disease vs louers in this wise
What hold your bed, there ꝑ and thy morow
I byd god so yeue you both sorow

Therwith ful sore he syghed, & thus he seyde
My lady right, and of my wele or wo
The wel & roote, o goodly myn Creseyde
And shal I dye alas, and shal I so
Nowe dye I that myn herte mote a two
And how should I my lyfe an houre saue
Sens that with you is al the lyfe I haue

What shal I done, for certes I not howe
Ne whan alas, I shal the tyme se
That in this plyte I may ben eft with you
And of my lyfe god wote howe shal that be
Sens that desyre ryght nowe so byteth me
That I am dede anon, but I retourne
Howe shulde I long alas, fro you sojourne

But natheles, myne owne lady bryght
Were it so that I wyste verely
That your humble seruaunt, & your knyght
Were myn your herte yset so fermely
As ye in myne, the whiche trewly
Me leuer were than these worldes twayne
Yet shuld I her endure al my payne

Creseyde answerde right anon
And with a syghe she sayd, O herte dere
The game wys so forforth now is gon
That first shal Phebus fallē from the sphere
And eyther ch Egle ben the douues fere
And euery rocke out of his place sterte
Er Troylus go out of Creseydes herte

Ye ben so depe within myne herte graue
That tho I wold it turne out of my thought
As wisely bery god my soule saue
To dyen in the payne, I couthe nought
And for ꝑ loue of god, that vs hath wrought
Let in your brayne none other fantasye
So crepe, that it cause me to dye

And that ye me wold haue as fast in mynde
As I haue you that wold I you beseche
And if I wist sothly that to fynde
God might not apoynt my loues eche
But herte myne, withouten more speche
Bethe to me trewe, or elis were it routhe
For I am thyn, by god and by my trouthe

Bethe glad for thy, and lyue in sykernesse
Thus sayd I neuer er this, ne shal to mo
And if to you it were a great gladnesse
To turne ayen sone after that ye go
As fayne wolde I as ye, it were so
As wisely god myn herte bring to reste
And him in armes take, and ofte kesse

Ayenst his wyll, sithe it mote nedes be
This Troylus vp rose and fast him cledde
And in his armes toke his lady free
An hundred times, & on his way him spedde
And with suche wordes, as his herte bledde
He sayd: farewel my dere herte swete
That god vs graunt sounde & sone to mete

To which no word for sorow she answerde
So sore gan his parteyng her distrayne
And Troylus vnto his paleys ferde
As wo bygon as she was, forth to playne
So hard him wrong of sharpe desyre ꝑ payne
For to ben eft there he was in pleasaunce
That it may neuer out of his remembraunce

Retourned to his royal paleys sone
He sore vnto his bed gan for to syke
To slepe longe, as he was wont to done
But al for nauȝt, he may wel lygge & wynke
But slepe may there non in his herte synke
Thinking how he, for who desyre him bette
A ful folde was worth more than he wende

And in his thought, gan vp & down to wende
Her wordes al, and euery countenaunce
And fermely impressen in his mynde
The lest poynte, that to him was pleasaunce
And verily of thilke remembraunce
Desyre al newe him brende, and lust to brette
Gan more than erst, & yet toke he none hede

Creseyde also, right in the same wyse
Of Troylus gan in her herte shette
His worthynesse, his lust, his dedes wyse
His gentylnesse, and how she vnto him mette
Thonkyng loue, he so wel her besette
Desyring ofte to haue her herte dere
In suche a place as she durst make him chere

Pandare a morowe, which ꝑ comme was
Vnto his nece, and gan her fayre grete
And sayd, al this nyght so rayned it alas
That al my brydes, that ye nere swete
Haue lyten leyser had to slepe and mete

In this night (qd he) hath rain so do me wake
That some of vs I trowe her hredes ake

And nere he came & sayd, how stant it now
This mery morow, nece howe can ye fare
Cresryde answerde, neuer the ber for you
Fore that ye ben, god yeue your herte care
God helpe me so, ye caused al this fare
Trowe I (qd she) for al your wordes whyte
O who so seeth you, knoweth you ful lyte

With that she gan her face for to wrie
With the shete, and wore for shame al reed
And Pandarus gan vnder for to prie
And sayd nece, yf that I shal ben deed
Paue here a swerde, and smyteth of my heed
With that his arme, al sodaynly he thrist
Vnder her necke, and at the laste her kyst

I passe al þ, which chargeth naught to say
What, god forgaue his death, and she also
Forgaue: and with her vncle gan to play
For other cause was there none than so
But of this thing right to the effecte to go
Whan tyme was, home to her house she went
And Pandare hath fully his entent

Now turne we ayen to Troylus
That restlesse ful longe a bed lay
And priuely sent after Pandarus
To him to come in al the hast he may
He come anon, nor ones sayd he nay
And Troylus ful soberly he grette
And downe vpon the beddes syde him sette

This Troylus with al thaffectioun
Of frendly loue, that herte may deuyse
To Pandarus on knees fyl adowne
And er that he wolde of the place aryse
He gan him thanken on his best wyse
In hundred tyme he gan the tyme blesse
That he was borne, to bring him to distresse

He said, o frende of frendes, the alderbest
That euer was, the sothe for to tel
Thou hast in heuen ybrought my soule at rest
Fro Phlegeton the fyry floode of hel
That though I might a thousande tymes sel
Vpon a day my lyfe in thy seruise
It might not a mote in that suffyce

The sonne, which þ al the world may se
Sawe neuer yet my lyfe, that dare I ley
So ioly, fayre, and goodly, as is she
Whose I am al, and shal tyl that I dey
And that I thus am hers, dare I sey
That thanked be the high worthynesse
Of loue, and eke thy kynde besynesse

Thus hast thou me no lytel thyng freue
For why to the obliged be for aye
My lyfe, & why for through thin helpe I liue
Or els deed had I ben ago many a day
And with that word down in his bed he lay
And Pandarus ful soberly him herde
Tyl al was sayd, and than he him answerde

My dere frende, if I haue done for the
In any case, god wote it is me lefe
And am as glad as man may of it be
God helpe me so, but take now e not agrefe
That I shal sayne, beware of this mischefe
That there as nowe brought art to thy blisse
That thou thy selfe, ne cause it not to mysse

For of fortunes sharpe aduersyte
The worste kynde of infortune is this
A man to haue ben in prosperyte
And it remembre, whan it passed is
Thou art wise ynow, for thy do nat amys
Be not to rakel, though thou syt warme
For if thou be, certayne it wol the harme

Thou art at ese, and holde the wel therin
For also sure as rede is euery fyre
As great a craft is to kepe wel as winne
Bridle alway wel thy speche and thy desyre
For worldly ioye holdeth not but by a wyre
That preueth wel, it brest alday so ofte
For thy nede is to werken with it softe

(Qd Troylus) I hope, and godere forme
My dere frende, that I shal so me bere
That in my gylte there shal nothing ben forme
Ne I wil not rakle, as for to greuen here
It nedeth not this matter ofte rere
For wystest thou myne herte wel Pandare
God wote of this thou woldest lyte care

Tho gan he tel him of his glad nyght
And wherof first his hert dradde, and he we
And sayd frende, as I am true we knyght
And by that fayth I owe to god and you
I had it neuer halfe so hote as nowe
And are the more that desyre me byteth
To loue her best, the more it me delyteth

L.iii. I not'

I not my frike not wolsely, what it is
But now I frie a newe qualyte
Ye al another than I dyd er this
Pandare answerde & sayd thus, that he
That ones may in heuen blysse be
He feleth other wayes dare I lay
Than thilke tyme he first herde of it say

This is a worde for al, that Troylus
Was neuer ful to speke of this matere
And for to playsen vnto Pandarus
The bounte of his right lady dere
And Pandarus to thanke, & maken chere
This tale was aye span newe to begynne
Tyl that the nyght departed hem a twynne

Soone after this, for that fortune it wolde
Icomen was the blysful tyme swete,
That Troylus was warned, that he sholde
There he was erst, Cresseyde his lady mete
For which he frite his hert in ioye flete
And fayrhfully gan al the goddes hery
And let se now, yf that he can be mery

And holden was the forme, and al the gyse
Of her commyng, and of his also
As it was erst, whiche nedeth nought deuyse
But playnly to the effecte right for to go
In ioye and surete Pandarus hem two
Abedde brought, whan hem bothe lest
And thus they ben in quiete and in rest

Naught nedeth it to you, sithe they ben met
To aske at me, if that they blythe were
For if it erst was well, tho was it bet
A thousande folde, this nedeth not enquere
I go was euery sorowe and euery fere
And bothe ywis they had, and so they wende
As moche ioye as herte may comprehende

This nys no lytel thynge of for to sey
This passeth euery wyt for to deuyse
For eche of hem gan others lyste obey
Felycite, which that these clerkes wyse
Commenden so, ne may not here suffise
This ioye ne may not ywritten be with pnke
This passeth al that hert may bethynke

But cruel day, so welaway the stounde
Gan for to aproche, as they by sygnes knewe
For which hem thought felé dethes wounde
So wo was hem, that changen gán her hewe
And day they gonnen to dispise al newe
Callyng it traytour, enuyous and wo3e
And bytterly the dayes lyght they co3e

(Quod Troylus) alas, nowe am I wo3se
That spyteous, and tho spyte3e stedes thre
Whiche that drawen forth the sonnes chere
Han gon some bypathe in dispite of me
And maketh it so sone day to be
And for the sonne him hasteth thus to ryse
Ne schal I neuer don him sacrifyse

But nedes day departe hem muste sone
And whan her speche don was, & her chere
They twyn anon, as they were wont to done
And setten tyme of metyng eft yfere
And many a nyght they wo3ozt in this manere
And thus fortune a tyme ladde in ioye
Cresseyde, and eke this kynges son of Troye

In suffysaunce, in blysse, & in kyngynges
This Troylus gan al his lyfe to lede
He spendeth, iusteth, & maketh festynges
He geueth freely ofte, and chaungeth wede
He helde aboute him al waye out of drede
A wo3ld of folke, as come him wel of kynde
The freshest, and the best he couthe fynde

That suche a boyce was of him, & a fame
Throughout ꝑ world, of honour and of gentrye
That it vp ronge vnto the yate of heuen
And as in loue he was in suche gladnesse
That in this herte he demed, as I gesse
That there nys louer in this wo3lde at ese
So wel as he, and thus gan loue him plese

The goodlyhede & beaute, which ꝑ kynde
In any other lady had yherte
Can not the mountenaunce of a gnat vnbynde
Aboute his hert, of al Cresseydes nerte
He was so narowe ymasked, and yherte
That is vndon on any maner syde
That nyl nat ben, for aught that may betyde

And by the honde ful ofte he wolde take
This Pandarus, and in to gardyn lede
And suche a fest, and suche a processe make
Hym of Cresseyde and of her womanhede
And of her beaute, that wythouten drede
It was an heuen his wordes for to here
And than he wolde synge in this manere

Loue, that of erthe & see hath gouernaunce
Loue, that his herte3s hath in heuen yre
Loue

Loue, that with an hoolsome alyaunce
Halt people ioyned, as hym lyste hem gye
Loue, that knitteth lawe and companye
And couples doth in vertue for to dwel
Vnde this accorde, that I haue tolde a tel

That, ꝑ the world wt fayth, which ꝑ is stable
Diuerseth so his stoundes accordyng
That elementes that bethe discordable
Holden a bonde, perpetually durynge
That phebus mote his rosy day forth bring
And ꝑ the mone hath lordshyp ouer ꝑ nyghtes
Al this dothe loue, aye heried be his mightes

That, that the sea, that gredy is to flowen
Constrayneth to a certayne ende so
hys floodes, that so fiersly they ne growen
To drenchen erthe and al for euer mo
And if that loue aught let hys bridel go
Al that nowe loweth a sonder shulde lepe
And lost were al, ꝑ loue hait nowe to hepe

So wolde to god, that auctour is of kynde
That with his bonde, loue of his vertue lisse
To seruen herres al, and faste bynde
That frō his bōde no wight ꝑ wey out wisse
And herres colde hem, wolde I ꝑ hem twitte
To make hem loue, & that litle hem aye rewe
On herres sore, & kepe hem that ben trewe

Anal nedes for the townes werre
He was, and aye the first in armes dight
And certaynly, but if that bokes erre
Haue Hector, most ydradde of any wight
And this encrease of hardynesse and might
Come him of loue, his ladyes thāke to wyn
That altered hys spyrite so within

Intyme of truce on hankyng wolde he ryde
Or his hunt bore, beare, or lyoun
The smal bestes let he gon besyde
And whan ꝑ he come rydyng in to the town
Ful ofte his lady frō her windowe downe
Is fresche as faucon, comen out of mue
Ful redely was hym goodly to salue

And most of loue & vertue was his speche
And in dispyte had al wrecchednesse
And doutelesse no nede was hym beseche
To honouren hem, that had worthynesse
And raser hem, that weren in distresse
And glad was he, if any wyght wel ferde
That louer was, whan he it wist or herde

For sothe to sayne, he lost helde euery wighte
But if he were in loues high seruyce
I meane folke that aught it ben of right
And ouer al this, so wel couthe he deuyse
Of sentement, and in so vncouthe wyse
Al hys array, that euery louer thought
That al was wel, what so he said or wrought

And thoughe that he be come of blode royal
Hym lyst of pryde, at no wight for to chace
Benigne he was to echo in general
For which he gate hym thanke in euery place
Thus wolde loue, ypeyred by his grace
That pryde and vie, enuye, and auarice
He gan to flye, and euery other vice

Thou lady bright, the doughter of Diane
Thy blynde & wanged sonne eke dan Cupide
Ye fusteen nyne eke, that by shelcome
Inhrl Bernard, lysten for to abyde
That ye thus ferre han beyned me to gyde
I can no more, but sens that ye wol wende
Ye heryed ben for aye withouten ende

Through you haue I said fully in my songe
The feerce and ioye of Troylus seruyce
Al be that there was some disease amonge
As myne auctour lysteth to deuyse
Thy thirde boke nowe ende I in this wise
And Troylus in lust and in quiete
Is with Creseyde, his owne herte swete

Explicit liber tercius.

But al to litel, weylaway the whyle
Lasteth such ioye, ypondred be fortune
That semeth trewest, whan she wol begyle
And can to fooles her songe entune
That she hem hent, ꝑ blent traytour cōmune
And whan a wight is frō her whele ythrowe
Than laugheth she, & maketh hem the mowe

From Troylus she gan her bright face
Away to writhe, and rose of him no nede
And caste hym clene out of his ladyes grace
And on her whele she set vp Diomede
For which myn herte right now gynneth blede
And nowe my pen alas, with which I write
Quaketh for drede, of that I must endyte

For howe Creseyde Troylus forsoke
Or at the leste, howe that she was vnkynde
Wote hence forthe, den mater of my boke
As writé folke, through which it is in minde
Alas that they shulde euer cause fynde
To speke her harme, & if they on her lye
Iwis hem selfe shulde haue the vylanye

O ye Herynes nightes doughters thre
That endelesse complayne euer in payne
Megera, Alecto, and eke Tesyphonee
Thou cruel Mars eke father of Quirynne
Thys yike fourth boke helpe me to fynne
So that the loos, and loue, and lyfe yfere
Of Troylus be fully shewed here

¶ Incipit liber quartus.

Yggyng in hoste, as I
haue sayde er this
The grekes stronge,
aboute Troy towne
Bysell, that whan that
Phebus shynyng is
Upon ꝑ brest of hercules Lion
That Hector, with many a bolde baron
Caste on a day with grekes for to fight
As he was wont, to greue hem what he mizt

Not I howe longe or short it was bytwene
This purpose, & that day they fighten mente
But on a day wel armed bright and shene
Hector & many a worthy knyght out wente
A chespeare in honde, & bygge bowes bente
And in the herde withouten lenger lette
Her fomen in the felde anon hem mette

The lóge day with speares sharpe ygronnde
With arowes, dartes, swerdes, & maces fel
They fight, & bringé horse, & man to groúde
And with her ares out the braynes quel
But in the laste shoure, sothe to tel
The folke of Troy hem seluen so misleden
That with ꝑ worse at night home they fledé

At whiche day was taken Anthenor
Maugre Polymydas, or Ponestro
Iantyppe Sarpedon, Palesthenor
Polyte, or eke the Troyan dan Rupheo
And other lasse folke, as Phebuseo
So that for harme ꝑ day the folke of Troye
Yeden to lese a great parte of her ioye

Of Priamus was yeue, at grekes requeste
A tyme of truse, and tho they gonnen trete
Her prisoners to chaungen moste and leste
And for the surplus yeuen sómes grete
This thing anon was couthe in euery strete
Bothe in thassege, in towne, and euery where
And with the first it came to Calcas ere

Whé Calcas knew this tretise shulde holde
In consistoire amonge the grekes sone
He gan in thinge, for the wise lordes olde
And set hym there as he was wont to done
And with a chaunged face, hem bade aboue
For loue of god, to done that reuerence
To stynten noyse, & yeue hym audience

Than sayd he thus, lo lordes myne I was
Troyan, as it is knowen out of drede
And if that you remembre, I am Calcas
That a derfirst yaue comfort to your nede
And tolde wel howe that you shulde spede
For dredelesse through you shal in a stounde
Ben Troy ybrent, & beaten down to groúde

And in what forme, or in what maner wyse
This towne to shende, & all your lust atchieue
Ye haue er this wel herde me deuyse
This knowe ye my lordes, as I leue
And for the grekes weren me so leue
I came my selfe in my proper persone
To teche in this, howe you was best to done

Hauyng vnto my treasour, ne my rent
Right no regarde, in respecte of your ese
Thus al my good I lefte, and to you went
Wening in this you lordes for to please
But al that losse me doth me no disease
I vouchsafe, as wisely haue I ioye
For you to lese, al that I haue in Troye

Saue of a doughter that I lefte, alas
Slepyng at home, whé out of Troye I stert
O sterne, O cruel father that I was
Howe might I haue in that so hard an herte
Alas that I ne had brought her in my herte
For sorowe of whiche I wol nat line to mo
But if ye lordes rewe vpō my sorowe (rowe

For bycause that I saiwe no tyme er nowe
Her to delyuer, iche bolden haue my pees
But nowe or neuer, if that it lyke you
I may her haue right nowe doutlees
O helpe and grace, amonge al this prees
Rewe

Reiue on thys olde caytyfe in distresse
And I through you haue all thys heuynesse

Ye haue nowe caught, and fettred in prison
Troyans ynowe, and if your wylles be
My childe with one may haue redemption
Nowe for the loue of god, and of bounte
Doe of so fele alas, so yefe hym me
What nede were it this prayer for to werne
Wyth ye shul haue, both folke & town as yern

On peryl of my lyfe I shal not lye
Apollo hath me tolde ful faythfully
I haue eke founde by astronomy
By sort, and by augury trewely
And dare wel say the tyme is fast by
That fire & flambe on all ỳ rwon shal sprede
And thus shal Troye turne to ashen dede

For certayne Phebus, and Neptunus bothe
That made den the walles of the toun
Ben wroth folke of Troye alway so wrothe
That they wol bring it to confusyoun
Right in dispyte of kyng Laomedoun
Because he nolde payen hem her hyre
The towne of Troye shal ben set on fyre

Telleng hys tale alway this olde grey
Humble in hys speche and lokyng eke
The salt teres from hys eyen twey
Ful fast ronnen downe by either cheke
So longe he gan of socour hem beseke
That for to heale him of his sorowes sore
They gaue him Antenor, without more

But who was glad ynough but Calcas tho
And of this thyng ful sone hys nedes leyde
Unto hem that shulden for the treatyse go
And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde
To bringen home kynge Thoas, & Creseyde
And whan Priam hys safegarde sente
Thembassadours to Troy streyt they went

The cause I tolde of her coming, the olde
Priam the kyng, ful sone in generall
Let here vpon his parlyment holde
Of whiche theffecte rehercen you I shal
Thembassadours ben answerde for fynal
The eschaunge of prisoners, & al this nede
Hem lyketh wel, and forth as they procede

This Troylus was present in the place
Whan asked was for Antenor Creseyde
For whiche ful sone chaungen gan his face
As he that with tho wordes wel nigh dede
But natheleste he no worde to it seyde
Lest men shulde hys affection espye
With mannes hert, he gan his sorowes drye

And ful of angurshe and of greuy drede
Abode, what other lordes wold to it sey
And if they wolde graunte, as god forbede
The eschaunge of her, the thought he thrise twey
First, howe to saue her honor, & what wey
He might best the eschaúce of her wit fonde
Ful fast he caste howe al this mught stonde

Loue hym made al prest to done her byde
And rather dyen, than he shulde go
But reason sayd hym on that other syde
Without en assent of her, do nat so
Lest for thy werke she wolde be wo for
And sayn, ỳ through thy medling is tolorne
Your bother loue, ther it was erst vnsworne

For whiche he gan delyberen for the beste
And though the lordes wolde that she went
He wolde let hem graunt what hem lyste
And tel his lady first what that they ment
And when that she had sayd hym her entent
Therafter wolde he werken al his wyse
Tho al the worlde ayen it wolde stryue

Hector which that wel the grekes herde
For Antenor, how they wold haue Creseyde
Gan it withstonde, and soberly answerde
Sirs, shewys no prisoner he seyde
I not on you who that this charge leyde
But on my parte, ye may eschewe hem wel
We vsen here, no women for to sel

The norse of people vp sterte them atones
As brimme as blase of straw ffyr on fyre
For infortune it wolde for the nones
They shulden her confusyon desyre
Hector go they what goth may you enspire
This woman thus to shilde, & done vs lese
Dan Antenor, a wronge way now ye chese

That is so wise, and eke so bolde baroun
And we haue nede to folke, as men may se
He is one the greatest of thys towne
O Hector, lete thy fantasyes be
O kyng Priam go they thus fragge we
That al our bayer is to forgone Creseyde
And to delyuer Antenor they preyde

O Junenal lorde, trewe is thy sentence
That lytel wenen folke what is to yerne
That they ne fynden in her desyre offence
For cloude of errour lette hem discerne
What best is, and lo, here ensample as yerne
These folke best ren nowe delyueraunce
Of Antenor ꝑ b̃ brought hem to mischaunce

For he was after traytour to the toun
Of Troy alas, they quitte hun out to rathe
O nyce worlde, lo thy discrecyon
Creseyde, which that neuer did hem scathe
Shal nowe no lenger in her blisse bathe
But Antenor, he shal come home to towne
And she shal out, thus sayd̃ heere a howne

For whiche delibered was by parlyment
For Antenor to yelden out Creseyde
And it pronounced by the president
Though that Hector nay ful ofte prayde
And fynally, what wight that it withsayde
It was for naught, it must ben, and sholde
For substaunce of the Parlyment it wolde

Departed out of the parlyment echone
This Troylus, without wordes mo
Into his chambre spedde hym faste alone
But if it were a man of hys or two
The whiche he bad out faste for to go
Because he wolde slepen, as he sayde
And hastely vpon his bedde hym layde

And as in winter leanes ben bryafte
Eche after other tyl trees be bare
So ꝑ there nis but barke and braũche ylafte
Lyth Troylus, bryafte of ech wel fare
Ibounden in the blacke barke of care
Disposed wode out of his witte to breyde
So fore him sate the chaunging of Creseyde

He tyld him vp, and euery doze he shette
And windowe eke, & tho this sorowful man
Vpon hys beddes syde downe hym sette
Ful lyke a dede vmage, pale and wan
And in his brest the heaped wo began
Out bruste, and he to worken in this wise
In his woodnesse, as I shal you deuyse

Right as the wilde bulle begynneth springe
Nowe here nowe there, rdarted to the herte
And of his deth roreth, in complaynyng
Right so gan he about the chambre sterte
Smiting his brest, aye vb his fystes smerte
His heed to the wall, his body to ꝑ grounde
Ful ofte he swapte him selue to confounde

His eyen two for pyte of hys herte
Out streemeden as swyfte as welles twey
The highe sobbes of his sorowes smerte
Hys speche him refte, vnnethes might he sey
O dethe alas, why nylt thou do me dey-
Accursed by that day whiche that nature
Shope me to ben a lyues creature

But after whan the fury and al the rage
Whiche that his herte twyste, and faste threst
By length of tyme somewhat gan aswage
Upon hys bedde he layde hym downe to rest
But tho begon his teares more out to brest
That wonder is the body may suffyse
To halfe this wo, which that I you deuyse

Than sayde he thus: Fortune alas the while
What haue I done? what haue I the agilte
Howe mightest thou for routhe me begyle-
Is there no grace? and shal I thus be spilte-
Shal thus Creseyde awaye for ꝑ thou wilt
Alas, how mightest thou in thyn herte fynde
To ben to me thus cruel and vnkynde?

Haue I the nat honoured al my lyue-
As thou wel wotest, aboue the goddes al
Why wylt thou me fro ioy thus depryue
O Troylus, what may men nowe the cal
But wretche of wretches, out of honour fal
Into misery, in whiche I wol bewayle
Creseyde alas, tyl that the breth me fayle

Alas Fortune, if that my lyfe in ioye
Displeased had vnto thy foule enuye
Why ne haddest ꝑ my father kynge of Troye
Bryafte the lyfe, or done my brethren dye
Or slayne my selfe, ꝑ thus complayne a ere
I combre worlde, that may of nothyng serue
But euer dye, and neuer fully sterue

If that Creseyde alone were me lafte
Naught rauzt I whyder ꝑ woldest me sterte
And her alas, thã hast thou me bryafte
But euermore, lo thys is thy maniere
To reue a wight, that most is to him dere
To preue in that thy grefull vyolence
Thus am I lost, there helpeth no defence

O dere lorde, O loue, O god alas
That konnest best min herte, & al my thought
What

What shal my sorowful life done in this caas
If I forgo that I so dere haue bought
Sens ye Creseyde & me haue fully brought
Into your grace, and both our hertes sealed
Howe may ye suffer alas it be repealed

What I may done I shal, while I may dure
Endure, in turment and in cruel payne
This infortune, or this disauenture
Alone as I was borne I wol complayne
Ne neuer wol I sene it shyne or rayne
But ende I wol as Edippe in derkenesse
My sorowful lyfe, and dyen in distresse

O wery goost, that errest to and fro
Why nyl thou flyen out of the wofullest
Body that euer might on grounde go
O soule, lurkyng in this woful nest
Flye forthout myn hert, and let it brest
And folowe alway Creseyde thy lady dere
Thy right place is nowe no lenger here

O woful eyen two, sens your disporte
Was al to sene Creseydes eyen bright
What shal ye done, but for my discomforte
Steden for naught, & wepen out your syght
Sens she is queynt, ý wont was you to lyst
Ye ne from this forth haue I eyen twey
Ifourned, sens your vertue is awey

O my Creseyde, O lady souerayne
Of this woful soule that thus cryeth
Who shal nowe reuen comfort to thy payne
Alas no wyght, but when myn hert dyeth
My spirite, whiche that so vnto you hyeth
Receyue in gree, for that shal ayen you serue
For thy no force is, though the body sterue

O ye louers, that hygh vpon the whele
Sen sette of Fortune, in good auenture
God sene that ye fynden ayen loue of stele
And longe more your lyfe in ioy endure
But when ye comen by my sepulture
Remembreth that your felowe resteth there
For I loued eke, though I vnworthy were

O olde vnholsome and mistyued man
Calcas I meane, alas what eyled the
To ben a greke sens thou art borne Troian
O Calcas, whiche that wolt my bane be
In cursed tyme was thou borne for me
As wolde blisful Ioue for his ioye
That I the had where I wolde in Troye

A thousande syghes hotter than the glede
Out of his brest, eche after other wente
Medled with playnte newe, his wo to fede
For whiche his woful teres neuer stente
And shortly so his sorowes hym torente
And wore so mate, that ioy or penaunce
He feleth none, but lyeth in a traunce

Pandare, whiche that in the parlyment
Had herde what euery lorde & burgeys seyd
And howe ful graunted was by one assent
For Antenor, to yelden out Creseyde
Gan wel nigh wode out of his wit to breyde
So that for wo he nyste what he mente
But in a rage to Troylus he wente

A certayne knyght, that for the tyme kepte
The chambre doore, vndyd it hym anone
And Pandare that ful tenderly wepte
In to the derke chambre as stil as stone
Towarde the bedde gan softly to gone
So confuse, that he nyst what to say
For very wo, his witte was nigh away

And with chere and lokyng al to rente
For sorowe of this, & with his armes folden
He stode this woful Troylus beforne
And on his pytous face he gan beholden
But so ofte gan his hert colden
Seyng his frende in wo, whose heurnesse
His hert slough, as thought hym for distresse

This woful wight, this Troylus ý I telle
His frende Pandare vp anen hym to se
Gan as the snowe ayenst the sunne melte
For whiche this woful Pandare, of pyte
Gan for to wepe, as tenderly as he
And specheles thus ben these yse twey
That neither might for sorowe o worde sey

But at the laste, this woful Troylus
With deed for smert, gan breyden out to rore
And with a sorowful noyse he sayd thus
Amonges his sobbes, and his syghes sore
O Pandare I am deed, withouten more
Haste thou not herde at parlyment be seyde
For Antenor howe lothe is my Creseyde

This Pandare ful deed and pale of hewe
Ful pytously answerde, and sayde yes
Als wisely were it false as it is trewe
That I haue herde, and wote al howe it is
O mercy god, who wolde haue trowed this

Who

Who wold hane wende ꝑ in so lytel a throw
Fortune our ioye wolde haue ouerthrowe

For in this worlde there is no creature
As to my dome, that euer sawe ruyne
Straunger thé this, through case or auenture
But who may al eschue or al deuyne
Suche is this worlde, for thy I thus define
Ne trust no wyght to fynde in fortune
Yt properyte, ber yeres ben cõmune

But tel me this, why thou art nowe so mad
To sorowen thus, why lyke ꝑ in this wise
Sens thy desire al holly hast thou had
So that by ryght, it ought enough suffice
But I that neuer felte in my seruyce
A frendly chere or loking of an eye
Let me thus wepe and waylen tyl I dye

And ouer al this, as thou wel wost thy selue
This towne is ful of ladyes al aboute
And to my dome, fairer than suche twelue
As euer she was, shal I fynde in some route
Ye one or twey, withouten any doute
For thy be glade man whome dere brother
If she be lasse, we shal trouue an other

And that god forbid alwar that eche pleasaũce
In one thynge onely, and in non other wyght
If one can synge, another can wel daunce
And this be goodly, she is glad and wyght
And this is fayre, and that can good aryght
Eche for his bestne holden is for dere
To the beroner and fauon for ryuere

And eke as bryt yanfis, that was ful wyse
The newe loue out chaseth ofte the olde
And vpon newe case lyeth newe auyse
Thinke eke thy selfe to sauen art thou holde
Suche fyre by processe, shal of kynde colde
For sens it is but casuel pleasaunce
Some case shal put it out of remembraunce

For also sure as day cometh after nyght
The newe loue, labour, or other wo
Or elis selde seyng of a wyght
Done olde affections al ouer go
And for thy part, thou shalt haue one of tho
To abridge with thy bytter paynes smerte
Absence of her, shal dryue her out of herte

These wordes sayde he for the nones all
To helpe his frende, lest he for sorow deyde
For doutlesse to done his wo to fal
He raught nat what vnthrift that he seyde
But Troylus that nygh for sorowe deyde
Toke lytel hede, of al that euer he mente
One eere it herde, at the other out it wente

But at the laste he answerde, & sayde frende
This lecherafte, or healed thus to be
Were wel syttyng, if that I were a fende
To trayen a wight, that trewe is vnto me
I pray god let this counsayle neuer thee
But do me rather sterue anone right here
Er I thus done, as thou me wolden lere

She that I serue ywis, what so thou seye
To whom myn herte enhabyte is by right
Shal haue me holly hers tyl that I deye
For Pandarus, sens I haue trouth hyght
I wol nat ben vntrewe for no wyght
But as her man I wol aye lyue and sterue
And neuer non other creature serue

And ther thou sayest thou shalt as fayre fynde
As she, let be, make no comparyson
To creature yfounded here by kynde
O leue Pandare, in conclusyon
I wol nat ben of thyn opynyon
Touchyng al this, for whiche I the beseche
So holde thy peace, & speke nat to me more

Thou bydest me I shulde loue another
Al freshely newe, and let Creseyde go
Is it the nat in my power leue brother
And though I might, yet wolde I nat do so
But canst thou playen raket to and fro
Nette in dock out, now this now ꝑ Pandare
Nowe foule fal her for thy wo that care

Thou sayest eke by me Pandarus
As he that whan a wight is wo bygon
He cometh to hym a pace, & sayth right thus
Thinke nat on sinerte, & thou shalt sele none
Thou mayst me first transmewen in a stone
And reue me my passyons al
Or thou so lyghtly do my wo to fal

The deth may well out of my brest departe
The lyf so longe may trys sorowe myne
But fro my soule shal Creseydes darte
Out neuermore, but dowen with Proserpine
Whan I am deed, I wol wonne in pyne
And there I wol eternally complayne
Thy wo, & how that twynned be we twayne

Thou

Thou hast here made an argument for fyne
Howe that it shulde lasse payne be
Creseyde to forgon, for she was myne
And lyued in ease and in felycite
Why gabbest thou, that sayest vnto me
That hym is worse ỳ is fro wele ythrowe
Than he had erst none of that wele knowe

But tel me nowe, sens ỳ the thynketh so light
To chaungen so in loue ave to and fro
Why hast thou nat done betily thy might
To chaungen her, that doth the al thy woe
Why nylte thou let her fro thyne hert goe
Why nylte thou loue another lady swete
That may thine hert setten in quiete

Yf thou hast had in loue ave yet mischaunce
And canst it not out of thyne hert dryue
I that lyued in lust and in plesaunce
With her, as moche as creature on lyue
Howe shuld I that forget, and that so blyue
O where hast thou ben hyd so longe in mewe
That canst so wel and formely the argewe

Nay god wote, naught worth is al thy rede
For whiche for what that euer may befall
Vnkouth wordes me I wol ben dede
O deth that rydest al forowes all
Come nowe, sens I so ofte after the call
For lefe is that dethe, forth for to fare
That ofte ycleped, cometh and endeth payne

Wel wote I, whyle my lyte was in quiete
Er thou me lerne, I wold haue ben wyse
But nowe thy comyng is to me so swete
That in this world, I nothyng so desyre
O dethe, sens with this sorowe I am a fyre
Thou ryd me anon in rerere derthe
Or with thy colde stroke myne hert quenche

Sens that ỳ slepe so fele in sondry wyse
Fremit her wyll, bitrayed day and nyght
Do me at my requeste this seruice
Delyuer now the worlde, so dostle thou right
Of me that am the wofullest wight
That euer was, for eyne is that I serue
Sens i this world of right nauȝt do I serue

This Troylus in rerere gan dubbyll
As lyeour out of allambyke ful faste
And Pandarus gan holde his tonge stylll
And to the grounde his eyen downe he caste
But natheles, thus thought he at laste
What parde, rather than my felow dey
Yet shal I somwhat more vnto him sey

And said frende, sens thou hast such destresse
And sens the lyst myne argumentes blame
Why nyle thy selfen helpe bote redresse
And with thy manhode letten al this game
Do rauysh her, ne canstle thou not for shame
And eyther let her out of towne fare
Or holde her fyrst, and leue thy wyfe fare

Art thou in Troye, hast non hardement
To take a wight, which that louest the
And wold her selven ben of thyne assent
Howe is nat this a mere fantasye
Lyfe vp anon, and let this weping be
And sythe thou art a man, for any thyng
I wol ben dede, or she shal ben myne

To this answerde him Troylus ful soft
And said, frende thou sayst me ful wel
Al this have I myn selfe thought eft
And more thyng than thou hast spoken tel
But what shal I vnto it al the delle
Myne hert is lorne, ther is non other bote
And whan that hit me remembreth of the manere
Of her departyng, it doth myne hert to bote

Ful ofte a day this towne I stryde wyde
For to auaunce hyng of myne enemyes
It shuld not ben ytold myn herte pryde
As in thyne eyen, ne dorste gret wordes wryde
I shuld haue ben a lyon of my dedes
Yet fortunes drawen it that I am caytyf
Sens her is vanysshed for the trouthe of me

I haue the thought, for to haue her grace
To ache her at my fadres at my grace
Thanne make I this wyse her acquayntaunce
Sens wel I wot I may her not purchace
For me my fadres in so high a place
As parauenture, hath her fadre enhaunced
Be wyl for me his lorde be repraued

Yet drede I most her hert to perturbe
With vyolence if I do such a shame
For it I wolde it openly disturbe
It must be dysclaundre to her name
And me were leuer dye than her diffame
As wolde god, but I shulde haue
Her honour, leuer than my lyfe to saue

Thus am I lorne, for aught that I can se
For certayne is that I am her knyght

I must her honour leuer haue than me
In euery case, as louer ought of right
Thus am I with desyre and reason twyght
Desyre for to disbourden her me redeth
And reason nyl not, so myne hert dredeth

Thus wepyng, that he couldē neuer cease
He sayd alas, how shal I wretche fare
For wel fele I alway my loue encrease
And hope is lasse and lasse Pandare
Encreasen eke the causes of my care
So welaway, why nyll myn hert breste
For as in loue there is but lytel reste

Pandare answerde, frend thou mayst for me
Done as the lyst, but had I it so hote
And thyne estate, she shuld go with me
Tho al this town cried on this thing by note
I nolde set at al that noyse a grote
For whā mē haue cried than wol they roun
Eke wōder last but .xv. dayes neuer in toun

Deuyne not in reason aye so depe
Ne curtesly, but helpe thy selfe anone
Bet is that other than thy selfen wepe
And namely sens ye two ben al one
Kepe hyr, for by myne heed she shal not gone
And rather be in blame a lytel yfounde
Than leue here as a gnat wouten woūde

It is no shame vnto you ne no vice
Her to withholden that ye loueth moste
Paraunture she myght holde the for nyce
To letten her go thus vnto the grekes hoste
Thynke eke fortune, as wel thy selfen woste
Helpeth hardy man vnto his empryse
And weyueth wretches, for her cowardyse

And though thy lady woldē alyte her greue
Thou shalt thy selfe thy peace hereafter make
But as to me certayne I can not leue
That she wold it as now for yuel take
Why shuld than for feare thyn hert quake
Thynke how Paris hath, that is thy brother
Hyr loue, and why shalt thou not haue another

And Troylus, o thyng I dare the swere
That if Creseyde, whiche that is thy lefe
Now loueth the, as wel as thou doest here
God helpe me so, she nyl not take a greue
Though thou do boote anon in this mischefe
And yf she wylneth fro the for to passe
Than is she false, so loue her wel the lasse

For thy take herte, & thinke right as a knyght
Through loue is broken alday euery lawe
Kythe now somwhat thy corage & thy myght
Haue mercy on thy selfe for any awe
Let not this wretched wo thyne hert gnawe
But manly set the world on fyre & seuen
And if thou dye a martyr go to heuen

I wol my selfe ben with the at this dede
Though I and al my kyn vpon a stownde
Shuld in a strete, as dogges lyggen dede
Through gyrte with many a bloody woūde
In euery case I wol a frende be founde
And if the lysteth here stereuen as a wretche
A dieu, the dyuel spede him that reccheth

This Troylus gan wt tho wordes quicken
And said frende, graunt mercy, I assent
But certaynly thou mayst nat so me prycken
Ne payne none ne may me so turment
That for no case, it is not myne entent
At thorte wordes, though I dyen sholde
To ranysshen her, but it her selfe it wolde

Why, so meane I qd Pādarus al this day
But tel me than, hast p̄ her wel assayde
That forowest thus & he answerde him nay
Wherof art thou qd Pādare than dismayde
That neste not p̄ she wol ben yuel apayde
To rauishen her, sens thou hast not ben there
But if that Ioue tolde it in thyn eere

For thy ryse vp as naught ne were anon
And wasshe thy face, & to the kyng p̄ wende
Or he may wondren whyder thou art gon
Thou must wt wisedom, him & other blende
Or vpon case he may after the sende
Or thou be ware, and shortly brother dere
Be glad, & let me werken in this matere

For I shal shape it so, that sykerly
Thou shalt this nyst somtime in some manere
Come speken with thy lady prively
And by her wordes eke, as by her chere
Thou shalt ful sone apercey ue & wel here
Of her entent, and in this case the beste
And fare now wel, for in this poynt I reste

¶ The swyfte fame, which p̄ false thynges
Equal reporteth lyke the thynges trewe
Was throughout Troy ysted, wt prest wynges
Fro man to man, and made his tale al newe
How Calcas doughter wuth her bryght hewe

Yt

A parlyment without wordes more
Igraunted was, in chaunge of Ameuore

The which tale anon right as Creseyde
Had herd, the which ỳ of her father rought
(As in this case) right nauȝt, ne whā he deyde
Ful besyly to Jupiter besought
Yeue hem mischaūce, ỳ this treȝys brought
But shortly lest these tales forthe were
She durst at no wight asken it for feere

As she that had her hert and al her mynde
On Troylus yset so wonder fast
That al this world ne mȝt her loue unbinde
Fro Troylus out of her hert caste
She wold den his, while ỳ her lyfe may laste
And she thus brenneth both in loue and drede
So that she nyst what was best to rede

But as men seue in towne, and al aboute
That women vsen her frendes to visyte
So to Creseyde of women came a route
For pytous loue, and wenden her delyte
And with her tales dere ynough a myte
These women, which that in the cyte dwell
They set hem downe, and layd as I shal tell

(Ō first that one) I am glad trewly
Because of you, that shal your father se
Another sayd, ywis so am not I
For al to lytel hath she with vs be
(Ō tho the thirde) I hope twys that she
Shal bringen vs the peace on euery syde
That whan she goth, almighty god her gyde

Tho wordes and tho womanysshe thynges
She herd hem rȝt as though she thēce were
For god it wote, her hertē on other thing is
Although the body sat among hem there
Her aduertence is alway els where
For Troylus ful fast her soule sought
Withouten wordē, on him alway she thought

These women ỳ thus wenden her to plese
Aboute naught gonne al her tales spende
Suche bauite ne can done her none ese
As she that al this meane whyle brende
Of other passyon than they wende
So that she felte almoste her herte dye
For wo, and wery of that companye

For which might she no lenger refrayne
Her teeres, they gan so vp to well
That gaue signes of her better payne
In whiche her spirite was, and must dwell
Remembring her from heuen vnto which hel
She fallen was, sens she forgo the sȝght
Of Troylus, and sorowfully she sȝght

And thylke fooles, stretyng her aboute
Made that she wept and sȝghed sore
By cause that she shuld out of the route
Departen, and neuer play with hem more
And they that had knowen her of yore
Se her so wepe, & thought it was hrudnesse
And echē of hem wepte eke for her distresse

And besily they gonnen her to comforten
One thing god wot, on which she lest thought
And with her tales wenden her disporten
And to be glad they ofte her besought
But such an ese therwith they her wrought
Right as a man is esed for to fele
For ache of heed, to clawen him on his hele

But after al this mee bauyte
They toke her leue, and home they wenten al
Creseyde ful of sorowful pyte
Into her chambre vp went out of the hall
And on her bedde she gan for dede to fal
In purpose neuer thence for to ryse
And thus she wrought, as I shal you deuyse

Her owndes heer, ỳ sonnysshe was of hewe
She rent, & eke her fingers longe & smale
She wronge ful ofte, & bade god on her rewe
And with the deth to do bote on her bale
Her hewe whylom bright, that she was pale
Bare wytnesse of her wo, & her contrevue
And thus she spake, sobbing in her compleynte

(Alas (Ō she) out of this regroun
I woful wrecche and infortuned wight
And borne in cursed constellacioun
Fro me gone, and thus departen fro my knight
Wo me, ech alas, that ilke dayes lyght
On which I saw him first with even twayne
That causeth me, & I him al this payne

Therwith the teeres from her eyen two
Downe fel, as shoure in Aprill swythe
Her whyte brest she bet, and for the wo
After the dethe she cryed a thousande sythe
Sens he that wonte her wo was for to lythe
She more forgon, for whiche disauenture
She helde her selfe a forlost creature

Sithe

Sithe

She sayd, how shal he done and I also
How shuld I lyue, if I from him twynne
O deere herte eke that I loue so
Who shal that sorow sleen, that ye ben inne
O Calkas father, thyn be al this synne
O mother myn, that cleaped were Argyue
Wo worth that day, that I me bare on lyue

To what fyne shuld I lyue a sorowen thus
How shuld a fysshe withouten water duree
What is Creseyde worthe from Troylus
Howe shuld a plante or lyues creature
Lyue withouten his kynde nourture
For which ful ofte, a by word here I sey
That sorelesse more greue some dey

I shal don thus, sens neyther swerd ne darte
Dare I none handle, for the cruelte
That like day that I fro you departe
I sle me of that myl nat my bane be
Than shal no meate ne drinke come in me
Til I my soule out of my brest vnclothe
And thus my seluen wol I don to dethe

And Troylus, my clothes euerychone
Shul blacke ben, in tokenyng herte sorete
That I am as out of this worlde agone
That wone was you to set in quiete
And of myne ordre aye, til dethe me mete
The obseruaunce euer in your absence
Shal sorow ben, complaynt, and abstynence

Myne herte, and eke the woful goost therin
Bequethe I with your spirite to complayne
Eternally, for they shal neuer twyn
For though in erthe twinned be we twayne
Yet in the felde of pyte, out of payne
That highte Elisos, shal we ben yfere
As Orpheus and Eurdice his fere

Thus herte myne, for Anenor alas
I sone shal be chaunged, as I wene
But how shul ye done in this sorowful caas
How shal your tendre herte this sustene
But herte myn, forget this sorow and tene
And me also, for sothly for to sey
So ye wel fare, I recche not to dey

How might it euer redde ben or songe
The playnt that she made in her distresse
I not, but as for me my lytel tonge
Yf I discryue wolde her heuynesse
It shulde make her sorowe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly defate
Her dite complaynte, and therfore I it pace

Pandare, which that sent from Troylus
Was vnto Creseyde, as ye haue herde deuise
That for the best it was acorded thus
And he ful glad to done him that seruyse
Vnto Creseyde in a ful secrete wise
There as she lay, in turment and in rage
Came her to tel al holly his message

And fonde that she her seluen gan to rente
Ful pytously, for with her salte terres
Her brest and face yblatered was ful wete
Her myghty tresses of her sonnysshe heres
Vnbrouden, hangen al aboute her eres
Which yaue him very signe of mariere
Of dethe, which that her herte gan desyre

Whan she him sawe, she gan for sorowe mone
Her tery face, atwyxt her armes hyde
For which this Pandare is so wo begon
That in the house he might vneth abyde
As he that felte sorowe on euery syde
For if Creseyde had erste complayned sore
Tho gan she playne a thousande tymes more

And in her aspre playnte, thus she seyde
Pandare, first of ioyes mo than two
Was cause, causyng vnto me Creseyde
That nowe transmued ben in cruel wo
Wherfor shal I say to you welcome or no
That alderfirst me brought vnto seruyse
Of loue alas, that endeth in such wyse

Endeth than loue in wo ye or men lyeth
And al worldly blysse, as thynketh me
The ende of blysse aye sorowe it occupyeth
And who troweth not that it so be
Let him vpon me wofull wyrche se
That my selfe hate, and aye my byrthe curse
Fryeng alway, fro wiche I go to worse

Who so me seeth, he seeth sorow al atonis
Payne, turment, playnte, wo, and distresse
Out of my wofull body harme there none is
As langour, anguysshe, cruel bytternesse
Anoye, smerte, drede, furye, and eke sickenesse
I trowe ywis from heuen seeres rayne
For pyte of my aspre and cruel payne

And thou my fustee, ful of discomforte
(O Pandarus) what thynkest thou to do

Why ne hast thou to thy selven some resport
Thy wyt thou thus thy selfe alas for do
Leaue al this werke, and take nowe hede to
That I shall sayne, & herken of good entente
This message, ỳ by me Troylus you sente

Turned her tho Creseyde, a wo making
So great, that it a dethe was for to se
Alas (qõ she) what wordes may ye bring
What wol my dere hert sayne to me
Whiche that I drede neuer more to se
Wol he haue playnte or teres er I wende
I haue ynough, if he therafter sende

She was ryght such to sene in her vysage
As is that wight that men on bere bynde
Her face lyke of paradys the ymage
Was al ychaunged in another kynde
The play the laughter, mẽ were wõt to fynde
On her, and eke her ioyes euerychone
Densed, and thus lyche Creseyde alone

Aboute her eyen two, a purple ryng
Yerent, in sothfast tokenyng of her payne
That to beholde it was a dedly thyng
For which Pandare might nat restrayne
The teres from his eyen for to rayne
But natheless as he best might he seyde
From Troylus these wordes to Creseyde

Lo nece, I trowe ye han herde al howe
The kyng with other lordes for the best
Hath made eschaunge of Antenor and you
That cause is of this sorow & this vnrest
But how this case doth Troylus molest
This may none erthly mans tonge say
For bery wo, his wyt is al away

For which we haue so sorowed, he and I
That in to lytel, it had vs both slawe
But through my counsayle this day fynally
He somwhat is fro wepyng withdrawe
And semeth me that he desyreth fawe
With you to ben al myght for to deuyse
Remedy of this, if there were any wyse

This short & playne, the effecte of my message
Is forforth as my wyt can comprehende
For ye that ben of turment in such rage
Say to no longe prologe as nowe entende
And herupon ye may answere hym sende
And for the loue of god my nece dere
So leaue this wo of Troylus be here

Great is my wo (qõ she) and sygheb sore
As she that feleth dedly sharpe distresse
But yet to me his sorowe is moket more
That loue him bet than he him selfe I gesse
Alas, for me hath he such heuynesse
Can he for me so pitously complayne
I wis this sorow doubleth al my payne

Greuous to me god wot is for to thynke
(Qõ she) but yet it harder is to me
To sene that sorowe, ỳ which that he is ynne
For wel wot I, it wol my bane be
And dye I wol in certayne (qõ she)
But byd hi come, er deth ỳ thus me threteth
Driue out ỳ golt, which in myn hert beteth

These wordes sayd, she on her armes two
Fyl grutte, and gan to wepen pitously
(Qõ Pandarus alas why do ye so
Sens ye wel wote the tyme is fall by
That he shal come, aryse vp hastely
That he you nat by wopen thus se rude
But ye wol haue him wode out of his mynde

For wyste he that ye farde in this maneere
He wolde him selfe slen and ryght as I wende
To haue this fare, he shuld not come here
For al the good that Priam may dispende
For to what fyne he wold anoon pretende
That know I wel, and for thy yet I fey
So leaue this sorowe, or playnly be wel bey

And shapeth you his sorowe for to abredge
And nat encrease, lete nece swete
Ye the rather to him cause of plat than edge
And with some wisdom, ye his sorowes bete
What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete
Or though ye both in salte teres drenne
Yet is a tyme of cure aye than of pleynte

I meane thus, whan I him hether brynge
Sens ye be wise, and both of one assent
So shapeth howe to dissymule your gonge
Or come ayen soone after ye be went
Women ben wise, in short amysement
And let sene how your wyt wol auayle
And what ỳ I may helpe, it shal nat fayle

So (qõ Creseyde) and vncle trewely
I shall done al my might me to restrayne
From wepyng in his syght, and besily
Pyne for to glad, I shal done al my payne
And in my herte feken euery payne

Yf to this soye there may ben founden salue
It shal not lacke certayne on myne halfe

Both Pandarus, and Troylus be sought
Tyl in a temple he founde hem al alone
As he that of his lyfe no lenger rought
But to the prouse goddes euerychone
Ful rendrely he prayed, and made his mone
To done him sone out of this world to pace
For wel he thought ther was non other grace

And shortely al the sothe for to seye
He was so fallen in dispayre that day
That verely he hope him for to deye
For right thus was his argument alway
He sayd he nas but lorne wela way
For al that cometh, cometh by necessyte
Thus to ben lorne it is my destyne

For certeynly this more I wel be sayde
That forsyght of dyuine purueyaunce
Had sene al way me to forgon Creseyde
Seyng god seeth euerything out of doutaúce
And hem disposeth through his ordynaunce
In his merites forthis for to be
As they shul comen by predestyne

But nathelesse alas, whom shal I leue
For there ben great clerkes many one
That destyne, through argumentes preue
And some sayne that nede there is none
But that fre choyce is yeuen us euery chone
O wela way, so sygh ame clerkes olde
That I not whose opinion I may holde

For some men saine, that god seeth al before
Ne god may not deceyued ben parde
Than moste it fal, though men ben loth therfore
That purueyaunce hath sene before to be
Wherfore I say, that from eterne if he
Hath wist before our thought eke as our dede
We haue no fre choice, as clerkes rede

For other thought, nor other dede also
Might neuer ben, but such as purueyaunce
Which may not ben deceyued neuer mo
Hath seied before, without ignoraunce
For if there might ben a variaunce
To writhen out fro goddes purueyeng
There nere no prescience of thing cõming

But it were rather an opinion
Uncertayne, and no stedfast foreseyng
And certes that were an abusyon
That god shuld haue no parfyte clere weyng
More than we men, that haue doutous wening
But such an errour vpon god to gesse
Were false and foule, and wicked cursednesse

Eke this is an opinyon of some
That haue her toppe ful high & smoth yshore
They sayne right thus, that thing is not to come
For that the prescience hath sene before
That it shal come, but they sayne that therfore
That it shal come, therfore the purueyaunce
Wote it before ne withouten ignoraunce

And in this maner this necessyte
Retourneth in his parte contrary againe
For nedefully behoueth it nat to be
That thilke thinges fallen in certayne
That be purueyed, but nedefully as they sayne
Behoueth it that thinges which that fall
That they in certayne ben purueyed al

I meane as though I laboured me wherby
To enquire which thing cause of which thing be
As whether that the prescience of god is
The certayne cause of the necessyte
Of thinges that to comen be parde
Or if necessyte of thing comyng
Be cause certayne of the purueyeng

But nother ne enforce I me not to knowe
How that order of that causes stat, but wel wot I
That it behoueth that the befalling
Of thinges unto before certaynly
Be necessarye, al seme it not therby
That prescience put falling necessarye
To thing to come, al falle it foule or fayre

For if there sat a man vnder an ake
That by necessyte behoueth it
That certes thyne opinyon sothe be
That weneth or conceyueth that he syt
And further ouer, now ame ayenwarde yet
Lo, right so is it on the parte contrarye
As thus, now we bethen for I wol nat tarye

I say that if the opinion of the
Be sothe for that he syt, than say I this
That he more syttem by necessite
And thus necessite in eyther is
For in him nede of syttyng is ywis
And in the nede of sothe, and thus forsothe
There more necessyte ben in you bothe

But

But thou mayst sayne ꝑ man sit nat therfore
That thyn opinyon of hys sittyng forthis
But rather for the man sate there before
Therfore is thyn opinyon sothe ywis
And I say, though the cause of sothe of this
Cometh of hys syttyng, yet necessitie
Is eyther chaunges, bothe in hym and in the

Thus in the same wyse out of doutaunce
I may wel maken, as it semeth me
Thy reasonyng of goddes purueyaunce
And of the thynges that to comen be
By whiche reson men may wel vse
That thylke thynges that in erthe fal
That by necessitie they comen al

For al though that forthyng shal come ywis
Therfore is it purueyed certainly
Nat that it cometh for it purueyed is
Yet nathelesse behoueth it nedefully
That thing to come be purueyed truely
Or els thynges that purueyed be
That they betyden by necessitie

And this sufficeth right ynough certayne
For to distroye out free choyse euerydell
But nowe is this abusyon to sayne
That fallyng of the thynges temporell
Is cause of the goddes prescience eternell
Nowe trewely that is a false sentence
That thyng to come shuld cause his prescience

What might I wene ꝑ I had such a thought
But that god purueyeth thing ywis to come
For that it is to come, and els nought
So might I wene that thinges al ꝑ come
That wyslom ben by fal and ouercome
Ben cause of thylke soueraine purueyaunce
That for wote al, withouten ignoraunce

And ouer al this, yet say I more therto
That right as when I wote there is a thing
Ywis that thyng more nedefully be so
Ek right so, when I wote a thyng coming
So more it come, and thus they befallyng
Of thynges that ben wytte before the tyde
They mowe not ben eschewed on no syde

Than sayd he thus, almighty Ioue in trone
That wottest of al this thing ꝑ fortaltaccle
Rewe on my sorowe, and do me bysen soone
Or bring Cresseyde to me fro this distresse
And while he was in al this besynesse
Disputing with hym selfe in this matere
Came Pandare in, as sayde as ye may here

O mighty god (qd Pandarus) in trone
Eyth, who sawe ever a wyse man fare for
Thy Troylus, what thynkest thou to done
Hastest thou suche lust to ben thyn owne for
What parde, yet is nat Cresseyde ago
Thy lyfe the sothe thy selfe forbon for drede
That in thyn herd, thyn eyen semen bede

Hastest thou nat lyned many a yere before
Without her and sayde ful wel at ease
Art thou for her and for none other borne
Hath kinde the wrought al only her to please
Let be and thynke right thus in thy disease
That in ꝑ dyce, right as there fallen chaunces
Right so in loue ther come and gon plesaunces

And yet thys is a wonder most of al
That ꝑ thus sorowest sith thou wost nat yet
Touchyng her going, how that it shal fal
Or if she can her selfe dissourben it
Thou hast nat yet assayed al her wit
A man may al bestyme his necke bede
When it shal of, and sorowen at the rede

For thy take hede of al that I shal say
I have with her spoke and longer yore
So as accorded was betwixe us tweye
And eurmore me thynketh thus, that she
Hath somwhat in her hertes priuite
Wherwith she can, if I shal ary ghe rede
Disturbe al this, of whiche thou art in drede

For whiche my counsel is, whan it is nyght
Thou to her go, and make of this an ende
And boldly I wote, though her angar smyte
Shal as I hope her grace vnto vs sende
Thyne hertes ese certayne she shal the sende
And for thy purpayne hers a token red
And holde thy purpose, for it is the bette

This Troylus answerde, and stared forth
Thou sayst right wel, and I wil do right so
And what hym lyste, he sayd vnto hym more
And whan that it was tyme for to go
Ful priuely hym selfe without mo
Vnto her came, as he was wont to done
And how they wrought, I shal you eft sone

Soth is, that when they gonne met to mete
So gan the payne her hertes for to twyste
That

That neither of hem other myght grete
But hem in armes toke and after kyste
The lasse woful of hem both nyste
Wher ỹ he was, ne might o worde out brig
As I sayde erst, for wo and for sobbynge

The woful teres that they leten fal
As bitter weren out of teres kynde
For payne, as is ligne, aloes, or gal
So bitter teres wept nat as I fynde
The woful Myrra, through ỹ barke & rynde
That in this world ther nis so herde an herte
That nold have rewed on her paynes smerte

But whan her woful werry gostes twayne
Returned ben, there as hem ought to dwel
And that somwhat to weken gan the payne
By length of playnte & ebben gan the wel
Of her teres, and the hert bul wel
Ybroken bote, all horse for thrist Creseyde
To Troylus these ylke wordes seyde

O Joue I dye, and mercy the beseche
Helpe Troylus: & therwithal her face
Upon hys brest she sayd, and loste speche
Her woful spirite from his proper place
Right with ỹ worde, a way in poynt to pace
And thus she lyth, with hewes pale & grene
That whilom freshe and fayre was to sene

This Troylus that on her gan beholde
Clepyng her name, and she lay as for deed
Withouten answere, & felt her limmes colde
Her eyen throwen upwarde to her heed
This sorowful man, can now non other rede
But oft tyme her colde mouthe he kyste
Where him was wo, god ỹ him selfe it wyste

He ryseth hym up, & long strayte he her leyde
For signe of lyfe, for aught he can or may
Can he none fynde, in nothing of Creseyde
For whiche his songe ful oft is welaway
But whan he sawe that speecheles she lay
With sorowful voyce, & hert of bliss al bare
He sayd, how she was fro this worlde yfare

So after that he longe had her complayned
Hys hondes wronge, & sayd that was to sey
And with his teres salt her brest bestayned
He gan the teres wypen of ful dreye
And pytously gan for the soule preye
And sayd, lorde that set art in thy trone
Rewe eke on me, for I shal folowe her sone

She colde was, and without sentement
For aught he wote, for brethe felte he none
And this was him a preignant argument
That she was forth out of this world agone
And when he saw there was non other wone
He gan her lymmes dresse, in suche manere
As men don hem that shall ben layde on bere

And after this, with sterne and cruel herte
His swerde anon out of his sheth he rwight
Him selfe to sleen, howe sore that him smerte
So that his soule, her soule folowen might
There as the dome of Minos wold it dight
Sith loue and cruel fortune it ne wolde
That in this worlde he longer lyuen sholde

Than sayd he thus, fulfylde of high disdayne
O cruel Joue, and thou Fortune adverse
This al and some, that falsely haue ye slayne
Creseyde, and sith ye may do me no werse
Fye on your might and werkes so dyverse
Thus cowardely ye shul me neuer wynne
There shal no deth me fro my lady twynne

For I this world, sith ye haue slain her thus
Al ler, and folowe her spirit lowe or hye
Shal neuer louer sayne that Troylus
Dare nat for frate with his lady dye
For certayne I wol beare her company
But sithe ye wol nat suffre vs lyuen here
Yet suffereth that our soules ben yfere

And thou cite, in wiche I lyue in wo
And thou Priam, and brethren al yfere
And thou my mother, farwel for I go
And Atropose make redy thou my bere
And thou Creseyde, o swete herte dere
Receyue nowe my spirite, wolde he sey
With swerde at herte, al redy for to dey

But as god wolde of swough she abrayde
And gan to syghe, and Troylus she eryde
And he answerde, lady myn Creseyde
Lyue ye yet, and let his swerde doune glide
Ye hert myn, that thanked be Cupyde
(Quod she) and therwithal she sore sight
And he began to glade her as he might

Toke her in armes two and kyste her ofte
And her to glad, he dyd al his entent
For whiche her gost, that flykered aye alofte
Into her woful herte ayen it went
But at the laste, as that her eye glent

Asyde,

I syde, anon she gan his swerde aspye
As it lay bare, and gan for feare crye

And asked hym, why he had it out drawe
And Troylus anon the cause her tolde
And how hiselfe therwith he wolde have slawe
For which Creseyde upon him gan beholde
And gan him in her armes fast folde
And sayde, o mercy god, so wrech a dede
Alas, howe nyghe we weren bothe dede

Than if I nadde spoken, as grace was
Ye wolde have slayn your selfe anon (qd she)
Ye dowtelesse: and he answerde alas
For by that yike lorde that made me
I nolde a forlong way on lyve have be
After your dethe, to have ben crowned quene
Of al ϸ londe the sonne on shyneth shene

But wh this selue swerde, whiche ϸ here is
My selfe I wolde have slayne (qd she) two
But ho, for we have right ynough of this
And let us ryse and streyght to bedde go
And there let us spoken of our wo
For by that mother, whithe that I se bicome
Knowe I ful wel, that day is nat ferre henne

Whan they wer in her bedde in armes folde
Nought was it lyke tho nightes here before
For pesonly eche other gan beholde
As they that hadden al her blysse yfore
Bewayling ayr the day that they were borne
Til at the last, this sorowful wight Creseyde
To Troylus these yike wordes seyde

Lo herte myn, wel wote ye thys (qd she)
That yf a wight alwaye his wo complayne
And seketh nat howe holpen for to be
It nys but folye, and encrease of payne
And fens that here assembled be we twayne
To synde bote of wo that we ben in
It were tyme al soone to begyn

I am a woman, as ful wel ye wotte
And as I am auysed sodaynly
So wol I tel you, whyle it is hotte
Me thynketh thus, that neither ye nor I
Ought halfe thys wo to maken skrifull y
For there is art ynough for to redresse
That yet is mysse, and stern this besynesse

Soth is, the wo the whiche we ben inne
For aught I wote, for nothyng cis is
But for the cause that we shulde twynne
Considred al, there nis no more amys
And what is than a remedy unto thys
But that we shape us sone for to mete
This al and sone, my dere herte swete

Nowe that I shal wel bringen it aboute
To comin ayen, sone after that I go
Therof am I no maner thyng in doute
For dredeles, within a weke or two
I shal ben here, and that it may be so
By al ryght, and in wordes trewe
I shal you wel an heape of wayes shewe

For whiche I wol nat maken longe sermon
For tyme yloste may nat recovered be
But I wol go to my conclusyon
And to the beste, in aught that I can se
And for the loue of god forgeue it me
If I speke aught ayenst your hertes reste
For trewely I speke it for the beste

Makyng alway a protestacyon
That nowe these wordes which I shal say
Nys but to shewe you my mocyon
To synde unto our helpe the beste way
And take it none otherwyse I pray
For in effecte, what so ye me comaunde
That wol I done, for that is no demaunde

Now herkeneth this, ye have wel herde how
My goyng graunted is by parlement
So ferforth ϸ it may not ben withstonde
For al thys worlde, as by my iugement
And sithe there helpeth none amendement
To letten it, lette it passe out of mynde
And let us shape a better way to fynde

The sothe is, the twynnyng of us twayne
Wol us disease, and cruelly anoye
But him behoueth sometyme have a payne
That semeth soue, if that he wol have ioye
And sith I shal no farther out of Troye
Than I may ryde ayen on halfe a monowe
It ought lasse causen us for to sorowe

So as I shal nat so den ded in mewe
That day by day, myn owne herte dere
Seins wel ye wote that it is nowe a trewe
Ye shal ful wel al myn estate here
And er that truce is done, I shal ben here
Than have ye bothe Antenor y wonne
And me also, herde glad nowe if ye conne

And

Andthinke right thus, Creseyde is now agō
But what, she shal come hastely ayen
And whan alas, by god, to rygte anon
Er dayes ten, this dare I safely sayne
And than at erste, shal we be so fayne
So as we shal togythers euer dwel
That al this worldes myght our blisse tel

I se that oft tyme, there as we ben nowe
That for the beste, our counsayle for to hyde
Ye spoke nat with me, nor I with you
In fourteny ght, ne se you gone tyde
May ye nat ten dayes than abyde
For myn honour, in suche auenture
Iwys ye mowe or elis lyte endure

Ye knowe eke howe that al my kyn is here
But if that onely it my father be
And eke myn other thynges al yfere
And namely my dere herte ye
Whom that I nolde knauen for to se
For al this worlde, as wyde as it hath space
Or elis se I neuer youres face

Why trowe ye my father in thys wyse
Coueyteth so to se me, but for drede
Leste in this towne that folkes me dispyse
Because of hym, for hys vnhappy dede
What wene my father what lyfe that I lede
For if he wist in Troye how wel I fare
Us needed for my wendyng nat to care

Ye, that euery day eke more and more
Men treate of peace, and it supposed is
That men the quene Helayne shal restore
And grekes vs restore that is myn
Though there were comfort none but this
That men purposen peace on euery syde
Ye may the better at ease of herte abyde

For if that it be peace, myn herte dere
The nature of the peace more nedes dryue
That men muste entrecommune yfere
And to and fro eke ryde and gone as blyue
Al day as thicke as been flyen from an hyue
And euery wight haue lyberty to bleue
Where as hym lyst, the bet without leue

And though so be that peace ther may ben none
Yet hyther, though ther neuer peace ne were
I must come, for whyder shulde I gone
Or howe mistaunce shulde I dwel there
Amonge the men of armes euer in fere
For whiche, as wysely god my soule rede
I can nat fene whyer of ye shulde drede

Haue here another way, if it so be
That al this thing ne may you not suffyce
My father as ye knowen wel parde
Is olde, and eke ful of coueityse
And I right nowe haue founden al the gyse
Without nette, wherwith I shal hym bete
And herkyneth nowe, if that ye wol a stete

To Troylus, men sayne that ful herde it is
The wolfe ful, and the wedder hole to haue
This is to sayne, that men ful ofte wys
Mote spenden parte, the remnant for to saue
For aye with golde, men may the herte graue
Of hym that set is vpon coueityse
And howe I meane, I shal it you deuyse

The moneble, whiche þ I haue in this toun
Vnto my father shal I take, and saye
That right for truste, and for saluacion
It sent is, from a frende of his or tweye
The whiche frendes feruently him praye
To frede after more, and that in hye
While that this town stant thus in ieopardye

And that shalbe of golde an huge quantyte
Thus shal I sayn, but leste folke it aspyde
This may be sent by no wight but by me
I shal eke shewen hym, if peace betyde
What frendes that I haue on euery syde
Toward the contre, to don the wrath pas
Of Priamus, and do hym stonde in grace

So what for o thyng and for other swete
I shal him so enchaunten with my sawes
That right in herten his soule is, shal be mete
For al Apollo, or his clerkes lawes
Or calculyng, auayleth nat thre hawes
Deffye of golde shal so his soule blende
That as me lyste, I shal wel make amende

And if he wolde aught by his sort it preue
If that I lye, in certayne I shal fonde
Disturben hym, and plucke by the sleue
Makyng hys sorte, and bearen him on honde
He hath nat wel the goddes vnderstonde
For goddes speke in amphibologies
And for o sothe, they tellen euermore lyes

Eke dede fonde first goddes, I suppose
Thus shal I sayne, and that his forwarde herte
Made

Made hym amys the goddes tert to glose
Whan he for ferde out of Delphos sterte
And but I make hym sone to conuerte
And done my rede, within a day or twey
I wol to you oblige me to dey

And trewely, as written wel I fynde
That al this thing was sayd of good entent
And that her hert trewe was and kynde
Towardes him, and spake right as she ment
And ȳ the sarre for wo nighe when she went
And was in purpose euer to be trewe
Thus writen they, ȳ wot her werkes knewe

Thus Troylus, with hert and eeres spradde
Herde al this thyng deuysed to and fro
And verily it semed that he had
The selue witte, but yet to let her go
Bis hert misraue hym euermo
But fynally he gan bys herte wreste
To rusten her, and toke it for the beste

For whiche the great fury of his penaunce
Was queynt ȳ hope, & therwith be bitwene
Began for toy the amorous daunce
And as the birdes, when the sonne shene
Deliten in her songe, in leues grene
Right so the wordes, that they spake yfere
Deliten hem, and made her hertes clere

But natheleſſe, the wendyng of Creseyde
For al this worlde may nat out of his mynde
For whiche ful oft he pensifly her preyde
That of her beste he might hertrewe fynde
And sayde her, certes if ye be kynde
And but ye come at day set in Troye
Me shal I neuer haue heale, honor, ne ioye.

For al so sothe as sonne vprist to morowe
And god so wysely thou me wofal wrecche
To rest bringe, out of this cruel sorowe
I wol my seluen slee, if that ye dreche
But of my dethe though lyte be to recche
Yet er that ye me causen so to smerte
Riue rather here my owne swete herte

For trewely myn owne lady dere
The sleyghes yet, that I haue herd you stere
Ful shapely ben to fallen al yfere
For thus men sayth, ȳ one thinketh the lere
But al another thynketh the ledere
Your stre is wise, and sayd is out of drede
Men may the wyse out renne, & nat out rede

It is ful harde to halten bn espred
Before a crepyl, for he can the crafte
Your father is in sleight as Argus eyed
For al be it that his moable is hym braſte
Bys olde sleight is yet so with hym lafte
Ye shal nat blende hym for your womanhede
Me sayne aright, and that is al my drede

I not if peace shal euermo betide
But peace or no, for euell me for gone
I wote sith Calcas on the grekes syde
Hath ones ben, and lost so foule his name
He dare no more come here ayen for shame
For whiche that we, for ought I can espye
To trusten on, nys but a fantasye

Ye shal eke seen your father shal you gyde
To ben a wyfe, and as he can yet bette
He shal some greke so preyse and wel guyde
That raysen he shal you with his speche
Or do you done be force, as he shal reche
And Troylus on whom your hert haue routh
Shal catelesse so ferren in his trouth

And ouer al this your father shal bifore
Us al, and sayne this euermore bifore
And that that sterge neuer shal arere
For why the grekes haue it al to done
Syl we ben slayne, & down our walles bronne
And thus he shal you with his wordes fele
That aye drede I, that ye wol bleue wele

Ye shal eke seen so many a lusty knyght
Amonge the grekes ful of worthynesse
And eche of hem, with herte, wit, & myght
To plesen you, done al his busynesse
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of sely Troyans, but yf routhe
Remorde you, or vertue of your trouthe

And this to me so greuous is to thynke
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende
Me dredeleſſe in me there may nat synke
O good opinyon, if that ye wende
For why, your fathers sleight wol vs shende
And if ye gone, as I haue tolde you yore
So thinke I nam but deed, without more

For which with humble, true & pitous hert
A thousande tymes mercye I you pray
So reweth on myn aspre paynes smerte
And doth somwhat, as that I shal you saye
And let vs stele away betwixt vs tway

And

And thinke ꝑ foly is, whan a man maye chese
For accident, his substaunce for to lese

I meane thus, that sens we mowe or daye
Wel scale away, and ben togyther so
What wyt were it to putten in assaye
(In case ye shulden to your father go)
If that ye mighten come ayen or no
Thus meane I, that were a great folye
To put that tyxkernelle in ieopardye

And vulgarly to speken of substaunce
Of treason may we bothe with vs lede
Ynough to lyve in honour and pleasaunce
Tyl vnto tyme that we shal ben dede
And thus we may eschewen al this drede
For euery other way ye can remyde
Myn herte yuus may therwith nat accorde

And hardely me dredeth no pouerte
For I have ben and frendes vis where
That thought me comen in our halle herte
Vis shulde neuer lacke golde ne grete
Nor ben ashamed whyle we dwelten there
And go but a-mong, for as in myn entente
This is the best, if that ye wol assente

Crese be such a fraye right in thys halle
And shuerden shotes me here herte trieue
We may wel scale away, as ye desyre
And fynden suche vnthrifty maters vpon
But afterwarde ful sore it wol be rue
And helpe me god so at myn moste nede
As causeles ye suffren al this drede

For thilke day that I for cherysshyng
Or drede of father, or for any other wight
Or for estate, delyte, or for weduing
Be false to you, my Troylus myn knyght
Saturnus doughter Juno, through her myght
As woode as Athamante do me brenne
Eternally with Furies in the pyt of hel

And this, on euery goddes festival
I swere it you, and eke on eche goddesse
On euery nymphe, and bothe infernal
On Satyry and faury more and lesse
That halue goddes ben of wodernesse
And Attropos my thredes of lyf to breste
If I be false, nowe trowe me yf you leste

And thou Mynos, that as an arowe clere
Thrugh Troy renest, ay downward to ꝑ see
Be witnesse of this worde, that sayd is here
That thylke day that I untrewe be
To Troylus, myn owne herte fre
That thou returne backewarde to thy well
And I with body and soule synke to hel

But that ye speke away thus for to go
And letten al your frendes, god forbede
For any woman that ye shulden so
And namely sens Troy hath now such nede
Of helpe, and eke of other thyng taketh hede
If this were wrille, my lyfe lay in balaunce
And your honor, god shilde vs fro mischaunce

And if so be that peace hereafter be take
As al day happeth after angre gaine
Why sholde the sorow and wo ye wolden make
That ye ne durst come ayen for shame
And er that ye ieoparden so your name
Yerth nat to balyn this botte fare
For bothe man ne womaneth neuer care

What trowe ye the people eke al about
Ne olde of it fare vus ful yngrate arede
They wolden say, and sweren it out of doute
That loue ne drank ye nat to dun this dede
But lufte boluptous and cowarde drede
Thus were al lost yuus myn herte dere
Your honour, whiche that now stondeth clere

And also thynketh on myn holy dede
That stondeth yet, how sone I shulde hem spede
And with what trybut sorowe I shulde be
If in this forme I shulde with you wende
Sle though I trusted into the worlde ende
Myn name shulde I neuer ayen wasshe white
Thus were I lost, and ꝑ were routh & synne

And for thy flee with reason al this here
Syen fayne the fyry ire ouercometh parde
He who so wol have lefe, he lefe mote lete
Thus maketh vertue of necessyte
By patience, and thynke that for de is he
Of fortune aye, that naught wol of her recche
And he ne baunsetthe no wight but a wrecche

And trusteth this, that certes herte swete
Or Phebus suffer, Lucina the shene
The lyon passe, out of this Aries
I wol ben here, withouten any wene
I meane, as helpe me Juno heuens quene
The tenth day, but if that dethe me assayle
I wol you sene, withouten any fayle

And

And nowe fo this be fothe (qõ Troylus)
I fhal wel fuffre vnto the tenthe day
Sens that I fe that nede it mote ben thus
But for the loue of god, if it be may
Holet vs ftealen priuely away
For euer in one, as for to lyue in reft
Myne herte fayth that it wol be the beft

O mercy god, what lyfe is this (qõ he)
Alas, ye flee me thus for very tene
I fe wel now that ye myftruften me
For by your wordes it is wel yfene
Now for the loue of Cerithia the fene
Miftruft me nat thus cauffeleffe for routh
Sens to be trew, I haue you plyt my trouth

And thynketh wel, that fometyme it is wyt
To fpende a tyme, a tyme for to wynne
Reparde lofne am I nat fro you yet
Though that we ben a day or two a fhynne
Dryue out the fantafyes vain withynne
And truftyth me, and leaueth ofe your forow
Or here my trouth, I wol nat lyue til morow

For if ye wyfte how fore it doth me fmerte
Ye wold reffe of this, for god thou woft
The pure fpirit weepeth in myne herte
To fene you weepen, which that I loue moofte
And that I more gone vnto the grekes hoofte
Yf euer it that I wyfte a remedye
To come ayen, right here I wolde dye

But certes I am not fo ouer a wyghe
That I ne can ymagynen a way
To come ayen that day that I haue hyght
For who may holden a thing ỹ wol away
Ne farther nought, for al his queynte play
And by my thrift, my wendyng out of Troye
Another day fhal turne vs al to ioye

For thy with al myne hert I you befeche
If that you lyft done aught for my preyere
And for the loue which that I loue you ofte
That er that I departe fro you here
That of fo good a comforte and a chere
I may you fene, that ye may bring at reft
Myne herte, which is at poynt to breft

And ouer al this I pray you (qõ he) tho
Myne owne herres fothfaft fuffyfaunce
Suth I am thyne al hole withouten mo
That whyle ỹ I am abfent, no plefaunce
Of other, do me fro your remembraunce
For I am euer agaft, for why men rede
That loue is thyng aye ful of befy drede

For in this worlde there lyueth lady none
Yf that ye were borne we as god defende
That fo betrayed were, or wo begone
As I, that al trouthe in you entende
And bourlefle, if that ofe other wende
I were but dede, and er ye cauffe fynde
For goddes loue, fo beth me naught vnkynde

To this anfwerd Troylus, and ferde
Now god, fo wo there nys no cauffe thynne
Be glad, as wys I neuer vnto Creffede
Suthe thilke day I fawe her firft with eye
Alas falfe me neuer that fyl that I dye
At thofe wordes, wel ye mave me leue
I can no more, it fhal be founde at preue

Graunt mercy good herte myne (qõ he)
And blyfful Venus let me neuer fterue
Er I may fonde of plefaunce to begete
To quyte him wel, that fo wel can deferue
And whyle ỹ god my wyt wyl me conferue
I fhal fo doue, fo trewe I haue you founde
That aye honour to me warde fhal redounde

For truffeth wel, that your eftate royal
Ne myne herte, nor onely worldly wele
Of you in were or turnay marchal
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or ryches elle
Me made me to rewe on your diffefle
But moral vertue, grounded vpon trouthe
That was ỹ cauffe I firft had on you routhe

The gentyl hert, I maafede that ye had
And that ye had as me thought gret mifpryce
Euery thyng that fowned in to bad
As rudenefle, and peoplyfhe apperyce
And that your reafon bridled your delyce
This made about me euery creature
That I was yours, and fhal while I may dure

And this my lengeth of yres nat fordo
Ne remuable fortune deface
But Iupiter, that of his might may do
The forowful to be glad, fo yeue vs grace
Er nyghes ten, to meten in this place
So that it may your hert and myn fuffyfe
And taketh now wel, for tyme is that ye ryfe

And after that they longe yplayned had
And ofte ykyft, and ftraynt in armes folde

The day gan ryse, and Troylus him clad
And rufully his lady gan beholde
As he that felte dethes cares colde
And to her grace he gan him recommaunde
Where he was wo, this hold I no demaunde

For mannes heed ymagynen ne can
Ne entendement conſyder, ne tonge tell
The cruel paynes of this ſorowful man
That paſſen euery turment downe in hell
For whan he ſawe that he ne myght dwell
Which that his ſoule out of his hert rent
Withouten more, out of the chambre he went.

Explicit li. iii. Et incipit li. iv.

AProchen gan the fatal deſtyne
That Joues hath in diſpoſycioun
And to you angry ſyſtren thre
Commyttyth to done execucioun
For which Creſeyde muſt out of the toun
And Troylus shal dwel forthe in pyne
Tyl Lachesis his thredе no lengre twyne

The golde treſſed Phebus hygh on loſte
Thryſe had al with his beames clere
The ſnowes molte, & zephirus as ofte
Ybrought ayen the tendre leaues grene
Sens that the ſonne of Eccuba the quene
Began to love her firſt, for whom his ſorowe
Was al, that she depart ſhuld a morowe

Ful redy was at prime Diomede
Creſeyde unto to the grekes hoſte to leed
For ſorow of which, she felte her hert blede
As she that wyſt what was beſt to reed
And trewly, as men in bokes reed
Men wyſte neuer woman haue the care
Ne was ſo lothe out of a towne to fare

This Troylus withouten rede or loze
As man that hath his loves eke forlore
Was waytyng on his lady euer more
As she that was forthfaſt croppe and more
Of al his luſt or loves here tofore
But Troylus now farwel al thy joye
For ſhalt thou neuer ſene her eſte in Troye

Sothe is, that whyle he bode in this manere
He gan his woful mantyl for to hyde
That wel vnneth it ſene was in his chere
But at the yate there she ſhulde out ryde
With certayne folke he houed her to abyde
And two bygon, al wolde he not him playne
That on his hoyſe vnneth he ſate for payne

For ire he quoke, ſo gan his herte gnawe
Whan Diomede on hoyſe gan him dyght
And ſayd vnto him ſelfe this ylke ſawe
Alas (qd he) thus foule a wretchydneſſe
Why ſuffre I it, why nyl I it redreſſe
Were it nat bet atones for to dye
Than euermore in langour thus to drye

Why nyl I make at ones ryche and poore
To haue ynough to done et that she goe
Why nyl I bringe al Troye upon a roore
Why nyl I ſleen this Diomede alſo
Why nyl I rather with a man or two
Steale her away, why wol I this endure
Why nyl I helpen to myne owne cure

But why he nolde done ſo fel a dede
That ſhal I ſayne, & why him ſyſt it ſpare
He had in hert alway a maner drede
Leſt that Creſeyde, in rumour of this fare
Shuld haue bē ſlayn, ſo this was all his care
And eke certayne, as I ſayd yore
He had it done, withouten woordes more

Creſeyde whan she redy was to ryde
Ful ſorowfully she ſyghed, and ſayd alas
But forth she more, for aught ỳ may betyde
And forth she rydeth ful ſorowfully a paas
There is none other remedye in this caas
What wōder is, though that her ſore ſmerte
Whan she forgoeth her own ſwete herte

This Troylus in gyſe of curteſye
With hauke on honde, & with an huge route
Of knyghtes, rode and did her compaye
Paſſynge al the valey, ferre without
And ferther wolde haue rydden out of doute
Ful fayne, and wo was him to gon ſo ſone
But turne he muſte, and it was eke to done

And right with that was Intenor ycome
Out of the grekes hoſte, and euery wight
Was of him glad, & ſayd he was welcome
And Troylus, al nere his hert irkyght
He payned him, with al his ful myght
Him to with holde of wepyng at leſte
And Intenor he kyſte, and made feſte

And therwithal he muſt his leaue take
And caſt his eye upon her pytouſly
And nere he rode, his cauſe for to make
To take her by the houde al ſoberly
And lorde ſo she gan wepen tenderly

And

And he ful softe and slyghly gan her sey
Now holde your day, and do me not to dey

With that his courser turned he aboute
With face pale, and vnto Diomede
No worde he spake, ne none of al his route
Of which the sonne of Tideus toke hede
As he that kouthe more than the crede
In suche a craft, and by the rayne her heute
And Troylus to Troye, homwardes wente

This Diomede, that lad her by the bridell
Whan that he saw the folke of Troye away
Thought, al my labour shal not ben on ydell
If that I may, for somwhat shal I say
For at the worst, it shorte may our way
I have herde say eke, tryues twyse twelue
Pere is a foole that wol foryete him selue

But natheles, this thought he wel ynough
That certainly I am aboute naught
Yf that I spoke of loue, or make it to tought
For doutelesse, if she haue in her thought
Him that I gesse, he may not ben y brought
So sone away, but I shal fynde a meane
That she nat yet were shal what I meane

This Diomede, as he that couthe his gode
Wha this was don, gan fallē forth to speche
Of this and that, and aske why she stode
In such disease, and gan her eke beseche
That if that he encreasen might or eche
With any thyng her ease, that she sholde
Cōmaund it him, and said he don it wolde

For trewly he swore her as a knyght
That ther nas thig, wherin he mist her plese
That he nolde don his payne, and all his might
To don it, for to don her herte ese
And prayde her she wolde her sorowe apese
And sayd, wis we grekes can haue love
To honourē you, as wel as folke of Troye

He said eke this, I wot you thinketh straūge
No wonder is, for it is to you newe
That acquaintaūce of these Trojans to chaūge
For folke of Grece, that ye neuer knewe
But wolde neuer god, but if as trewe
I grete ye shulde amonge vs al fynde
As any Troyan is, and eke as kynde

And be cause I swore you ryght nowe
To ben your frende, and helply to my myght
And for that more acquayntaūce eke of you
Haue I had, than another straunger wyght
So fro this forth, I pray you day and nyght
Cōmaundeth me, how sore that me smerte
To done, al that may lyke vnto your herte

And that ye me wold, as your brother treate
And taketh not my frendshyp in dispite
And thouz your sorowes ben for thinges grete
Not I nat why, but out of more respite
Myn herte hath for to amende it great delyte
And if I may your harmes nat redresse
I am right sory for your heuynesse

For though ye Troyans, vn to vs grekes wrothe
Haue many a day ben, alway yer parde
O god of loue, in sothe we seruen bothe
And for the loue of god my lady free
Whom so ye hate, as bothe not wroth vs me
For trewly there can no wight you serue
That half so loth your wrath wold deserue

And were it that we ben so nere the kynne
Of Calcas, which that sone vs bothe may
I wolde of this you tel al myne entente
But this enseled tyl another day
Pese me your honde, I am and shal be aye
God helpe me so, while y my lyfe may dure,
Your owne, abouen curry creature

Thus sayd I neuer er nowe to woman bowne
For god myne herte as wisely gladde to
I loued neuer woman here before
As paramours, ne neuer shal no mo
And for the loue of god be not my foe
Al can I not to you my lady dere
Complayne aright, for I am yet to lere

And wōdreth nought myne own lady bright
Though y I spoke of loue to you this yore
For I haue herde or this of many a wight
How loued thing he neuer sawe his lyue
Eke I am not of power for to stryue
Ayenst the god of Loue, but him obey
I wol alwaye, and mercy I you prey

There beth so worthy knyghtes in this place
And ye so fayre, that euerych of hem al
Wol payne him to stonden in your grace
But might me so fayre a grace fal
That ye me for your seruaunt wolde cal
So lowly, ne so trewly you serue
Nylnone of hem, as I shal yet I serue

Creseyde vnto that purpose lyte answerde
As she that was with sorowe oppressed so
That in effecte she naught his tales herde
But here & there, nowe here a worde or two
Her thought her sorowful hert brast a two
For whan she gan her father ferre espye
Wel nyghe downe of her horse she gan to sye

But nathelesse she thonketh Diomede
Of al his trauayle and his good chere
And that him lyst his frende hyp to her bede
And she accepteth it in good manere
And wol do fayne that is him lefe and dere
And trusten him she wold, and wel she myght
As sayd she, and from her horse she alyght

Her father hath her in his armes nome
And twenty times he kist his doughter swete
And sayde here doughter myne welcome
She sayd eke, she was fayne with him to mete
And rode forthe myer, myrde, and manyere
But here I leaue her with her father dwell
And forth I wol of Troylus you tell

To Troye is come this woful Troylus
In sorowe abouen al sorowes swete
With frion loke, and face despitous
Tho sodaynly down fro his horse he lepte
And through his paleys with sworne herte
To chambre he went, of nothing toke he hede
Ne none to him dare speke a worde for drede

And there his sorowes that he spared had
He vaue an issue large, and gerte he cryde
And in his throwes, frenetyke and mad
He curseth Juno, Apollo, and eke Cupide
He curseth Bachus, Ceres, and Cipride
His byrthe, him selfe his fate, and eke nature
And saue his lady, euery creature

To bed he goth, & wryth there & turneth
In furye, as doth he Jxion in hell
And in this wyse he nyght tyl day sojourneth
But tho began his hert ayre vnswell
Through teres, which that gonen vp to wel
And pitously he cryed vpon Creseyde
And to him selfe right thus he spake & seyde

Where is myne owne lady lefe and dere
Where is her white brest, where is it where
Where ben her armes, and her eyen clere
That yesterday this tyme with me were
Nowe may I wepe alone many a tere
And grasp aboute I may, but in this place
Saue a pylowe, I fynde naught to embrace

How shal I don whan shal she come agayn
I not alas, why let I her go
As wold god I had as tho be slayn
O herte myn Creseyde, O swete fo
O lady myne, that I loue and no mo
To whom for euer more myne hert I dowe
Se howe I dye, ye nyl me not reskowe

Who seeth you now, my right lode sterre
Who syeeth right nowe in your presence
Who can cōforten now your herres werre
Now I am gon, whom reuerence audyence
Who speketh for me tyl now in your absence
Alas no wyght, and that is al my care
For wel wote I, as yuel as I ye fare

How shuld I thus ten dayes full endure
Whan I the first nyght haue al this fere
Nowe shal she eke sorowful creature
For tenderneffe, how shal she this sustene
Suche wo for me, o pyrous, pale, & grene
Shal ben your freshe womanly face
For langoure ye turne vnto this place

And whan he fyl in any slombrynges
Anon begyn he shuld for to grone
And dreamen of the dredfullest thynges
That myght ben, as mete he were alone
In place horrible, making are his mone
Or meten that he was amonges all
His enemyes, and in her bondes fall

And ther with al his body shulde sterte
And with the sterte al sodaynly awake
And suche a tremour fele about his herte
That of the feare his body shuld quake
And therwith al he shulde a noyse make
And lerne as though he shulde fal depe
From high alofte, and than he wold wepe

And reuen on him selfe so pitously
That wonder was to here his fantasye
Another tyme he shulde mighrely
Comforte him selfe, and sayne it was folye
So causeleffe, such sorde for to dye
And eft begyn his asyre sorowes newe
That euery man might on his payne rewe

Who couldē tell al, or fully discryue
His wo, his playnt, his langour, & his pyne

Al

Nat al the men that han or ben on lyue
Thou redest mayst thy selfe ful wel deuyne
That such a wo my wyt can not defyne
Lo ydel for to write it shulde I swynke
Whan that my wyt is werry it to thynke

On heuen yet the sterres weren sene
Although ful pale iwoxen was the moone
And whyten gan the orisonte shene
Al reste warde, as it is wonte to doone
And Phebus with his rosy carte soone
Gan after that to dresse him up to fare
Whan Troylus hath sent after Pandare

This Pandare, that of al the day before
Ne might him comen this Troylus fro se
Although he on his hed it had swore
For with the kyng Priam al day was he
So that it lay nat in his lyberte
Nowhere to gon, but on the morow he went
To Troylus, whan that he for him sent

For in his herte he coulde wel deuyne
That Troylus al nyght for sorowe woke
And that he wolde tel him of his pyne
This knewe he wel ynough without boke
For which to chäbre streight ꝑ waye he toke
And Troylus tho soberly he greete
And on the bed ful soone he gan him sete

Quod Pandarus, ô Troylus the sorowe
Which that I drye, I may not long endure
I trowe I shal not lyuen yet to morowe
For which I wold alwayes on auenture
Ordeine of my sepulture
The forme, and of my moeuable thou dispose
Right as the semeth best is for to done

But of the fyre and flambe funerall
In which my body brennen shal to glede
And of the feest and playes palestrall
At my bigyle, I pray the take good hede
That ꝑ be well, and offre Pallas rede
My swerde, myne helme, and leue brother dere
My helde to Pallas yeue, that shyneth clere

The poudre, in which min herte bristle shal turne
That pray I the thou take, and it conserue
In a boyste that men clepeth an vrne
Of golde, and to my lady that I serue
For loue of whom thus pytously I sterue
So yeue it her, and do me this plesaunce
To prayen her to kepe it for a remembraunce

For wel I sey by my maladye
And by my dreames, nowe and yore ago
Al certainly, that I moste nedes dye
The oule eke, whiche that hyght Ascaphylo
Hath after me shright al these nightes two
And god Mercury, now of me woful wrecche
The soule gyde, and whan the lyst it fecche

Pandare answerde, and sayd Troylus
My dere frende, as I have tolde the yore
That it is folye for to sorowen thus
And causeleslie, for whiche I can no more
But who so wol not trowen trede me lore
I can not sene in him no remedye
But let him worchen with his fantasye

But Troylus I pray the tel me one
Yf that thou trowest er this that any wight
Hath loued paramours as wel as thou
Ye god wot, and fro many a worthy knyght
Hath his lady gon a fourtenyght
And he nat yet made halvendele the fare
What nede is the to maken al this care

Sens day by day thou mayst the selfe se
That from his love, or elis from his wyfe
A man moste twynnen of necessyte
Ye, though he love her as his owne lyfe
Yet nyl he with him selfe thus make stryfe
For wel thou wost my leue brother dere
That alway frendes may not ben yfere

How doon this folke, ꝑ seyn her loves wedded
By frendes might as it betydeth ful ofte
And seyn hem in her spouses bed ybedded
God wote they take it wisely fayre and softe
For why, good hope halt vp her herte alofte
And for they can a tyme of sorowe endure
As tyme hem hureth, a tyme doth hem cure

So shuldest thou endure, and letten slyde
The tyme, and fonde to ben glad and lyght
Ten dayes nys not so longe to abyde
And sens she to comen the hath behyght
She nyl her herte breken for no wyght
For drede the not, that she nyl fynde way
To come ayen, my lyfe that dureth ay

Thy lettres eke, and al suche fantasye
Dryue out, and let hem fare to mischaunce
For they procede of thy melancolye
That doth the fele in slepe al this penaunce
I drawe for al swenenes signifiaunce

God helpe me so, I counte hem not a beene
There wot no mã aryght what hyemes meene

For pryestes of the temple tellen this
That dreames ben the reuelations
Of goddes, and als wel they tell ywis
That they ben infernalles illusyons
And leches sayne, that of complections
Proceden they of fast, or glotonye
Who wot in sothe thus what they signifye

Eke other sayne, that through impressions
As if a wight hath fast a thing in mynde
That therof cometh suche auyrions
And other sayne, as they in bokes fynde
That after tymes of the yere by kynde
Men dreame, and þ effect goth by þ moone
But leue no dreame, for it is nat to doone

Wel worth of dreames aye these olde wyues
And trewly eke, augurye of these foules
For feare of whiche, men weuen lese her liues
As rauês qualm, or schriching of these oules
To trowen on it, bothe falsse and foule is
Alas alas, that so noble a creature
As is a man, shuld drede suche ordure

For which with al myne herte I the beseche
Lat be thy selfe, that al this thou forbere
And ryse now vp, withouten more speche
And let vs cast how forth may best be driuen
The tyme, & eke how trestely we may lyuen
Whan she cometh, þ which shal be right sone
God helpe me so, the best is thus to done

Ryse, let vs speke of lusty lyfe in Troye
That we haue lad, and forth the tyme dryue
And eke of tyme comyng vs reioye
That bringen shal out blysse nowe so blyue
And langour of these twyse dayes fyue
We shal therwith so foryet or oppresse
That wel vneth it done shal vs duresse

This towne is ful of lordes al aboute
And truce lasteth al this meane while
Go we playen vs in some lusty route
To Sarpedon, not hence but a myle
And thus thou shalt the tyme wel begyle
And dryue it forth, vnto that blysful morowe
That thou her se, þ cause is of thy sorowe

Nowe ryse my dere brother Troylus
For certes it non honour is to the
To wepe, and in thy bed to rouken thus
For trewly of o thyng trust to me
Þ thou thus lygge, a day, two or three
The folke wol wene, that for cowardyse
The fayntest sycke, & that þ darst not ryse

This Troylus answerde, O brother dere
This folke knowe that haue yfuffred payne
That thouz he wepe, & make sorowful chere
That frieth harme & smert in euery vayne
No wonder is, and though I euer playne
Or alway wepe, I am nothyng to blame
Sens þ I haue lost, þ cause of al my game

But sens of fyne force I mote aryse
I shal aryse, as sone as euer I may
And god, to whom myne hert I sacrifyse
So sende vs hastely the tenthe day
For was there neuer foule so fayne of May
As I shal ben, whan that she cometh in Troy
That cause is of my turment and my ioy

But whider is thy rede (qõ Troylus)
That we may play vs best in al this toun
By god my counsayle is (qõ Pandarus)
To ryde and play vs with kyng Sarpedon
So longe of this they spoken vp and doun
Tyl Troylus gan at the last assente
To ryse, & forth to Sarpedon they wente

This Sarpedon, as he that honourable
Was euer his lyue, and ful of hye prowesse
With al that might yserued ben on table
That deyntie was, al coste it great richesse
He fedde hem day by day, that such noblesse
As sayden bothe the moste and eke the leest
Was neuer er that day wyste at any feest

Nor in this worlde there is none instrument
Delycious, through wynd or touche on corde
As ferre as any wight hath euer ywent
That tonge tell, or hert may recorde
But at that feest, it nas well herde recorde
Of ladyes eke so fayre a compayne
On daunce er tho, was neuer ysene with eye

But what auayleth this to Troylus
That for his sorowe, nothyng of it rought
But euer in one, as hert pretous
Ful besyly Creseyde his lady sought
On her was euer al that his hert thought
Now this now that, so fast ymagenyng
That glad iwys can him no festyng

Thes

Theſe ladyes eke, that at this feſt ben
Sens that he ſawe hys lady was awey
Ie was hys ſorowe vpon hem for to ſeen
Or for to here on inſtrumentes pley
For he that of his hert hath the key
Was absent, ſo this was his fantaſye
That no wyght ſhulde maken melodye

Nor there nas hour in al the day or nyght
When he was there as no man myzt him here
That he ne ſayd, o louesome lady bright
Howe haue ye faren ſens that ye were there
Welcome ywis myn owne lady dere
But welaway, al this nas but a maſe
Fortune his houe, entended her to glaſe

The letters eke, that she of olde tyme
Had him ysent, he wolde alone rede
An hundred ſythe, at wyzt noone and prime
Kefiguryng her ſhappe, & her womanhede
Within his hert, and euery worde and dede
That paſſed was, & thus he dzoue to an ende
The fourth day, and ſayd he wol wende

And ſayd leue brother Pandarus
Intendeſt thou that we ſhal here bleue
Or Sarpedon wol forth conueyen vs
Yet were it fayzer that we toke oure leue
For goddes loue, let vs now ſone at eue
Our leaue take, & homwarde let vs turne
For trewely I nil nat thus ſoiourne

Pandare anſwerde, be we comen hyther
To fetchen fyze, and rennen home agayne
God helpe me ſo, I can nat telleu whyther
We might gone, if I ſhal ſothly ſayne
There any wight is of vs moze fayne
Than Sarpedon, and if we hence hye
Thus ſodaynly, I holde it vylanye

Whan that we ſayden we wolde bleue
With him a weke, and nowe thus ſodaynly
The fourth day to take of hym our leue
He wolde wondzen on it trewely
Let vs holden forth our purpoſe fermely
And ſens that ye behyghten him to abyde
Holde forwarde nowe, & after let vs ryde

Thys Pandarus, with al pyne and wo
Made him to dwel, and at the weekes ende
Of Sarpedon they toke her leaue tho
And on her way the ſpeden hem to wende
(O Troylus) nowe lozde me grace ſende
That I may fynde at myn home cõmyng
Creſeyde comen, & ther with gan he ſyng

Ye haſelwode thought this Pandare
And to hym ſelfe ful ſoftly he ſeyde
God wotte refroyden may this horte fare
Er Calcas ſende Troylus Creſeyde
But natheleſſe he iaped thus and ſeyde
And ſwore ywis, his hert him wel behight
She wolde come, as ſone as euer she might

Whan they vnto the paleys were comen
Of Troylus, they downe of horſe alyght
And to ꝑ chambre, her way haue they nomen
And vnto tyme that it gan to nyght
They ſpeken of Creſeyde the lady bright
And after this, when hem both leſte
They ſpede hem fro the ſupper vnto reſt

On morowe, as ſone as day began to clere
This Troylus gan of hys ſlepe to abzeyde
And to Pandarus, hys owne brother dere
For loue of god, ful pyteuſly he ſeyde
Ags go we ſene the paleys of Creſeyde
For ſens we yet may haue no more feſt
So let vs ſeyne her paleys at the leſt

And therwithal his meyne for to blende
A cauſe he fonde in towne for to go
And to Creſeydes houſe they gon wende
But lozde this ſely Troylus was wo
Him thought his ſorouful hert braſte a two
For when he ſawe her doores ſperred al
Wel nigh for ſorowe adowne he gan to fal

Therwith when he was ware, & gan beholde
Howe ther was euery windowe of the place
As frost him thought his hert gan to colde
For whiche with chaunged deedly pale face
Withouten worde, he forth by gan to pace
And as god wolde, he gan ſo faſte ryde
That no wight of his countenaunce aſpyde

Than ſayde he thus: O paleys deſolate
O houſe of houſes, whilom beſt yhyght
O paleys empty and diſconſolate
O thou lanterne, of which quent is the light
O paleys, whilom day ꝑ nowe art nyght
Wel oughteſt thou to fal, and I to dye
Sens ſhe is went, that wont was vs to gye

O paleys whylom crowne of houſes al
Enlumyned with ſonne of al blyſſe

O ryng, of whiche the rubye is out fal
O cause of wo, that cause hastè ben of blisse
Yet sens I may no bet, fayne wolde I kysse
Thy colde doores, durst I for thys route
And fare wel chyne, of whiche the fame is out

Therwith he caste on Pandarus hys eye
With chaunged face, and pitous to beholde
And whan he might his eyme aryght aspye
Aye as he rode, to Pandarus he tolde
Hys newe sorowe, and eke his foyes olde
So pitously, and with so deed an hewe
That euery wight, myght on his sorowe rewe

Fro thence forth he rydeth vp and downe
And euery thyng came hym to remembraúce
As he rode forthe by the places of the towne
In whiche he whylom had al his pleasaunce
Lo, yonder sawe I myn owne lady daunce
And in that temple with her eyen clere
Me caught first my right lady dere

And yonder haue I herde ful lustely
My dere herte laugh, and yonder play
Sawe I her ones eke ful blisfully
And yonder ones to me gan she say
Nowe good swete, loue me wel I pray
And yonde so goodly gan she me beholde
That to the death myn herte is to her holde

And at the corner in the yonder house
Herde I myn aldereuest lady dere
So womanly, with voyce melodyous
Singen so wel, so goodly and so clere
That in my soule yet me thynketh I here
The blisful sowne, and in that yonder place
My lady first me toke vnto her grace

Than thought he thus, o blisful lorde Cupide
Whan I the processe haue in memorye
How thou me hast werryed on euery syde
Wel might a boke make of it lyke a storye
What nede is the to seke on me victorye
Sens I am thyn, and holly at thy wyl
What ioy hast thou thyn owne folke to spyl

Wel hast thou lorde ywroke on me thyn yre
Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greue
Nowe mercy lorde, thou woste wel I desyre
Thy grace moste, of al lustes leue
And lyue and dye I wol in thy beleue
For whiche I ne aske in guerdon but a bone
That thou Creseyde ayen me sende sone

Distrayne her herte as fast to returne
As thou doest myn to longen her to se
Than wote I wel that she nyl nat soiourne
Nowe blisful lorde, so cruel thou ne be
Vnto the blode of Troye, I pray the
As Juno was vnto the blode Thebane
For which ỳ folke of Thebes cauzt her bane

And after this he to the yates wente
There as Creseyde out rode, a ful good pace
And vp & down there made he many a wente
And to hym selfe ful ofte he sayd alas
Fro hence rode my blysse and my solas
As wolde blisful god nowe for his ioye
I might her sene ayen come to Troye

And to the yonder hyl I gan her gyde
Alas, and there I toke of her my leue
And yonde I sawe her to her fader ryde
For sorowe of whiche myn herte shal to cleue
And hyther home I come whan it was eue
And here I dwel, out caste from al ioye
And shal, tyl I may sene her efte in Troye

And of hym selfe ymagyned he ofte
To ben defayted, pale, and woren lesse
Than he was wonte, & that men saiden softe
What may it be, who can the sothe gesse
Why Troylus hath al this heuynesse
And al this nas but hys melancolye
That he had of him selfe suche fantasye

Another tyme ymagynen he wolde
That euery wight that went by the wey
Had of hym routhe, & that they sayne tholde
I am right sory, Troylus wol dey
And thus he drouc a day yet forth or twey
As ye haue herde, suche lyfe gan he lede
As he that stode betwixen hope and drede

For which him lyked in his songes shewe
Touchen son of his wo, as he best myght
And made a songe, of wordes but a fewe
Somwhat his woful herte for to lyght
And when he was from euery mannes sight
With softe voyce, he of hys lady dere
That absent was, gan sing as ye may here

O sterre, of whiche I lost haue al the lyght
With herte sore, wel ought I to bewayle
That euer derke in turment, myght by nyght
Towarde my dethe, th winde I sterre a sayle
For whiche the tenth night, if that I fayle

The

The gydyng of thy bemes bright an houre
Wythyn and me Carybdes wol deuoure

This songe when he thus songen had sone
He fyl ayen in to his sighes olde
And euery night, as was hys wont to doone
He stode the bright moone to beholde
And al his sorowe he to the moone tolde
And sayd, ywis whan thou art horned newe
I shal be glad, if al the worlde be trewe

I sawe thyn hornes olde eke by ỳ morowe
Whan hence rode my right lady dere
That cause is of my turmēt and my sorowe
For whiche, o bright Lucina the clere
For loue of god ren fast about thy spere
For whan thyn hornes newe gynnen spryng
Than shal the come ỳ may my bly sse bryngе

The day is more, and lenger euery nyght
Than they ben wont to be, him thought tho
And that the sonne went his course bnright
By lenger way than it was wonte to go
And sayd, ywis I drede me euer mo
The sunnes sonne Pheton be on lyue
And that his fathers carte amysse he dryue

Upon the walles faste eke wolde he walke
And on the grekes hoste he wolde se
And to him selfe right thus he wolde talke
Lo, yonder is myn owne lady fre
Or els yonder, there the toures be
And thence cometh this ayre that is so soote
That in my soule I fele it doth me boote

And hardly this wynde that more and more
Thus stoundmele encreaseth in my face
Is of my ladyes depe sighes sore
I preue it thus, for in none other space
Of al this towne, saue onely in thys place
Fele I no wynde, that sowneth so like payne
It sayth alas, why twyned be we twayne

This longe tyme he dryueth forth right thus
Tyl fully passed was the nynthe nyght
And aye besyde hym was this Pandarus
That besely dyd al his ful myght
Hym to comforte, and make his hert light
Yeuing him hope alway the tenthe morowe
That she shal comen, & shynen al hys sorowe

Upon that other syde eke was Creseyde
With women fewe, amōge the grekes stroge
For whiche ful oft a day, alas she seyde
That I was borne, wel may min hert longe
After my dethe, for nowe lyue I to longe
Alas, and I ne may it not amende
For nowe is worse than euer yet I wende

Wy father nyl for nothyng do me grace
To gone ayen, for aught I can hym gurne
And if so be, that I my terme pace
Wy Troylus shal in his hert deme
That I am falce, & so it may wel seme
Thus shal I haue bnthenke on euery syde
That I was borne so wela way the tyde

And if that I me put in ieopardye
To stale away by myght, and it befal
That I be caught, I shal be holde a spye
Or els lo, thys drede I moste of al
Ifun the hondes of some wreche I fal
I nam but lorde, al be myn hert trewe
Nowe mighty god, thou on my sorowe rewe

Ful pale yworen was her bryght face
Per lynnes leane, as she that al the day
Stode whan she durst, & loked on the place
There she was borne, and dwelt had ayre
And al the nyght wepyng alas she laye
And thus dyspeyred out of al cure
She lad her lyfe, thys wofull creature

Ful ofte a day she sighed eke for dystresse
And in her selfe she wente ave purrayeng
Of Troylus the great worthynesse
And al hys goodly wordes recordyng
Sens first that day her loue began to spring
And thus she serre her woful hert a fyre
Through remembraunce of ỳ she gan desyre

In al this worlde there nys so cruel hert
That her had herd complayning in her sorowe
That nold haue wept for her paynes smert
So tenderly she wept, bothe eue & morowe
Her neded no teres for to borowe
And this was yet the worste of al her payne
She was no wyst, to whom she durst playne

Ful rewfully she loked vpon Troye
Beheld the toures high, and eke the hallis
Alas, qd she the pleasaunce and the ioye
The whiche ỳ nowe al turned in to gal is
Haue I had ofte, within yonder wallis
O Troylus, what doest thou now she seyde
Lorde whether ỳ yet thynke vpon Creseyde

Alas

Alas, that I ne had yrrowed on your loze
And went with you, as ye me redde er this
Than had I nowe not ſyghed halfe ſo ſore
Who might haue ſayd, that I had don amis
To ſtraie away with ſuche one as he is
But al to late cometh the ſecuriarye
Whan men the corſe bere to the graue carye

To late is nowe to ſpeke of that matere
Prudence alas, one of them euen thre
Me lacked alwar, er that I came here
For on tryne paſſed wel remembred me
And preſent tryne eke couthe I wel ſe
But future tryne, er I was in the ſnare
Couthe I not ſene, ſ cauſeth nowe my care

But natheleſſe, herde what herde
I ſhall to morowe at nyght, by eeſt or weſt
Out of this boſte ſtraie, on ſome ſyde
And gone with Troylus, where as him leſt
This purpoſe wel I holde, and this is the beſt
No force of wicked tonges iangleryng
For euer on loue, haue wretches had enuye

For who ſo wel of euery worde take hede
Remembren by euery wightes wet
He ſhal be neuer thrunen out of drede
For that that ſome men blame ful often yet
Lo, other maner folke commenden it
And as for me, for al ſuche variaunce
I recure euer I my ſuffyſaunce

For whiche, without any more des mo
To Troye I wol, as for conclu ſyon
But go it were, er fully monthes two
Shal paſſed be fro that enuenyon
For bothe Troylus and Troye toun
Shal knowlich throughout her herte ſyde
For he wol take a purpoſe for to abyde

This Diomede, of whom I tou ri gan
Both nowe within hym ſelfe are arguing
With al the ſtreight and al that euer he can
Howe he may beſt with honeſt tarrying
Into hys nette Creſeyde bring
To this entent he couthe neuer fyne
To fiſhen her, he layde out hoke and lyne,

But natheleſſe, wel in his herte he thought
That ſhe was not without a loue in Troye
For neuer ſithen he her thence brought
Ne couthe he ſene her laugh, or maken ioye
He myſt howe beſt her herte forracoye
But for taſſay, he ſayd nought it ne greueth
For he ꝑ naught aſſayeth naught atcheueth

Yet layd he to hym ſelfe vpon a nyght
Nowe am I nat a fole, that wote wel howe
Her two is, for loue of another wyght
And herupon to gon aſſaye her nowe
I may wel were, it nyl nat ben my prowe
For wyſe folke in bokes it expreſſe
Ben ſhal nat wowe a wight in heuyneſſe

But who ſo might winnen ſuche a floure
Fro him, for who ſhe mourneth night and daye
He myght ſayne he were a conqueroure
And right anone, as he that bolde was aye
Thought in his herte, hap howe hap maye
Al ſhulde I dye, I wol her herte ſeche
I ſhal no more leſen but my ſpeche,

This Diomede, as bokes vs declare
Was in his dedes parfit and corageous
With ſterne voyce and mighty lymmes ſquare
Hardy, reſtleſſe, ſtronge and chiualrous
Of dedes lyke hys father Tydeus
And ſome men ſayne, he was of ſtrength large
And bette he was, of Caledony and Arge

Creſeyde his eame was of her ſtature
Thereto of ſhappe, of face, and eke of chere
There might ben no fayrer creature
And ofte tryne this was her maner
To gone vttreſſed with her heeres clere
Doune by her coleye, at her backe behynde
Which with a tyrſde of golde ſhe wold bynde

And ſaue her browes ioyned ben yfere
There was no lacke, in aught I can eſpyen
But for to ſpeken of her eyen clere
Lo, trewly they wamten that her ſeyen
That parabas ſtode formed in her eyen
And with her riche beaute euer more
Strooue loue i her, ay which of hē was more

She ſobre was eke, ſimple, and ful of alle
The beſte norriſhed eke that might be
And goodly of her ſpeche in generall
Charitable, eſtately, iuſtly, and fre
Ne neuer more ne lacked her pyte
Ne drede herted, ſtyrring of corage
But trewly I can nat tel her age

And Troylus wel worthy was in alle
And complete formed by proporcioun

So wel, that kynde is naught amendé might
Yonge, frethe, stronge, and hardy as lyoun
Trewe as stele, in eche condicioun
One of the beste entechéd creature
That is or shal, while ỳ the worlde may dure

And certaynly, in story as I it is fonde
That Troylus was neuer vnto no wyght
As in his tyme, in no degre secounde
In darryng do, that longeth to a knyght
Il might a gyaunt passen hym of myght
His hert ave with the first and with the best
Stode perregal to dare done what him lest

But for to tellen forthe of Diomede
I fynd, that after on the tenthe day
Syns that Creseyde out of the cyte yede
This Diomede, as fresh as braunche in may
Came to the tente there as Calcas lay
And fayned him with Calcas haue to done
But what he mente, I shal you tellen sone

Creseyde at shorte wordes for to tel
Welcomed him, a downe him by her sette
And he was eche ynough to maken wel
And after this, withouten longe lette
The spyces and the wine men forth hem fet
And forthe they speke of this and that there
As trewes done, of which some shall ye here

He gan first fallen of the werre in speche
Betwixen hem and the folke of Troye toun
And of that folke he gan eke her beseche
To tellen him what was her opynyoun
For that demaunde he so discreuéth doun
To asken her, if that her straunge thought
The grekes gyfe, a werkes that they wrought

And why her father tarryeth so longe
To ben with him her vnto some worthy wight
Creseyde that was in her paynes stronge
For loue of Troylus her owene knyght
So forth as she comyng had or might
Answerde hym tho, but as of his entente
It semed nat she wyste what he mente

But nathelesse right thus this Diomede
Gan on him self assure, and thus he seyde
If I ought haue taken on you to bede
Me thynketh thus, o lady myn Creseyde
That fyrst and first most on your beyde leyde
Al myn entente and al my busynesse
Me might I ones fene you but in seurte

I can nat sayne what may the cause be
But if for loue of some Troyan it were
The whiche right sore wolde athynken me
That ye for any wight that dwelleth there
Shulden spyl a quarter of a teere
Or pryuely your retorn so begyle
For trewely it is nat worthe the whyle

The folke of Troye, as who sayth al at ones
In prison ben, as ye your selven se
Fro thence shal nat one on lyue come
For al the golde atwixen sonne and se
Trusteth wel, and vnderstondeth me
There shal nat one to mercy gone on lyue
Al were he lorde of worldes thryfe lyue

Such wreche on hem for feeding of Hectore
There shal be take, er that we hence wende
That Parnaso, which ỳ goddes be of pryse
Shal ben agast that grekes wol hem shende
And men shal drede vnto the worldes ende
From hence forthe, to taughten any oweme
So cruel that our wreche on hem be seme

And but if Calkas lede vs with ambages
That is to sayne, with double wordes fyne
Suche as men clepen a word to thinke and gon
Ye shal wel knowen that I nat me fyne
And al this thing right sone a wol wyse eyne
And that anon, ye nyl nat trowe howe soone
Ylowe taketh hede, for it is for to conne

What were ye your wyfe forther wolde
Haue ferre Ineuer for you anon
If he me wylle that the cyte holde
Delyuered hem whyle may so gone
For wite we ful wel there shal nat scapen one
That Troyans is, and for the grete fyre
He durste nat that ye dwelt longer there

What wol ye more, o louesom lady dere
Let Troy and troyans fro your hert passe
Dryue out ỳ drery hope, and make good chere
And clepe ayen the beaute of your face
That ye with salte teres so deface
For Troy is brought in suche a ieopardye
That it to saue is nowe no remedye

And thynketh wel, ye shal in grekes fynde
A more parfyte loue, er it be nyght
Than any Troyan is, and more kynde
And bet to serven vow wol don his myght
And if ye vouchesafe my lady nyght

I wol

I wol ben he, to ſtruen you my ſeine
Ye leauer than be lorde of Greces twelue

And with that worde he gan to waxen reed
And in his ſpeche a lytel whyle he quoke
And caſte aſyde a lytel with his heed
And ſtynte a whyle, and afterwarde he woke
And ſobrely on her he threwe his loke
And ſayd I am, al be it to you no ioye
As gentyl a man, as any wight in Troye

For if my father Tydeus, he ſeyde
Alyued had, I had ben er this
Of Calcidony and Argе a kyng Creſeyde
And ſo hope I that I ſhal be ywis
But he was ſlayne alas, the more harme is
Unhappely at Thebes al to rathe
Polynyte, and many a man to ſcathe

But herte myne, ſythe that I am your man
And ben the firſt, of whom I ſeche grace,
To ſerue you as hertely as I can
And euer ſhal whyle I to lyue haue ſpace
So that, er I departe out of thys place
Ye wol me graunte that I may to morowe
At better layſer tel you of my ſorowe

What ſhulde I tel his wordes that he ſpede
He ſpake ynough for o day at the meſt
It preueth wel he ſpake ſo, that Creſeyde
Graunted on the morowe at his requeſt
For to ſpeke with him at the leeſt
So that he nolde ſpeke of ſuche matere
And thus she to hym ſayd, as ye mowe here

As she that had her hert on Troylus
So faſte, that there may it none arace
And ſtraungely she ſpake, and ſayde thus
O Diomede, I loue that yike place
There I was borne, a Joues of thy grace
Deliuer it ſone of al that doth it care
God for thy myght ſo leue it wel to fare

That grekes wold her wrath on troy wreke
If that they might I knowe it wel ywis
But it ſhal naught befallen as ye ſpeke
And god to forne, and farther ouer this
I wote my father wyſe and redy is
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde
So dere am I the more vnto hym holde

That grekes ben of high condicioun
I wotte eke wel, but certayne men ſhal finde
As worthy folke within Troye toun
As conuyng, as parfyte, and as kynde
As ben betwixt Orcades and Inde
And that ye couthe wel your lady ſerue
I trowe eke wel, her thonke for to deſerue

But as to ſpeke of loue, ywis she ſeyde
I had a lorde, to whom I wedded was
The whoſe myn herte was al tyl he deyde
And other loue, as helpe me nowe Pallas
There in myn hert nys, ne neuer was
And that ye ben of noble and high kinrede
I haue wel herde it tellen out of drede

And that doth me to haue ſo great a wonder
That ye wol ſcornen any woman ſo
Eke god wote, loue and I ben fer a ſonder
I am diſpoſed bet ſo more I go
Unto my dethe playne and make wo
What I ſhal after done, I can nat ſay
But trewely as yet me lyſte nat play

Myn herte is nowe in tribulacion,
And ye in armes buſy day by day
Herafter when ye wonnen haue the toun
Parauenture than, ſo it happen may
That whan I ſe that I neuer ere ſay
Thā wol I werke that I neuer ere wrought
This worde to you ynough ſuffyſen ought

To morow eke wol I ſpeken with you faine
So that ye touchen naught of this matere
And whan you lyſt, ye may come here agayn
And er ye gon, thus muche I ſay you here
As helpe me Pallas, with her heeres clere
Yf that I ſhulde of any greke haue routhe
It ſhulde be your ſelue by my trouthe

I ſay nat therfore that I wol you loue
Ne ſay nat nay, but in concluſyoun
I meane wel by god that ſtant aboue
And therwithal she caſte her eyen doun
And gan to ſigh, and ſaid, Troilus a Troy toun
Yet bydde I god, in quiet and in reſte
I may you ſene, or do myn herte breſt

But in effecte, and ſhortely for to ſaye
This Diomede al freſhly newe agyne
Gan preaſen on, and faſt her mete praye
And after this the ſothe for to ſaye
Her gloue he toke, of whiche he was ful fayn
And fynally, whan it was wox eue
And al was wel, he roſe and toke his leue

The

The bright Vemus folowed and aye taught
The way there brode Phebus downe alight
And Cytherea her chare horse ouer raught
To whyrle out of the lyon, if she myght
And Signifer his candels sheweth bright
Vpon that Cresseyde vnto her bed wente
Within her fathers fayre bright tente

Retournyng in her soule aye vp and downe
The wordes of this sodayne Diomede
His great estate, and perel of the towne
And that she was alone, and had nede
Of frendes helpe, and thus began to brede
The cause why, the sothe for to tell
She toke fully purpose for to dwell

The morow came, & goostly for to speke
This Diomede is come vnto Cresseyde
And shortly, lest that ye my tale lacke
So wel he for him selfe spake and seyde
That al her syghes sore, downe he leyde
And fynally, the sothe for to sayne
He lefte her the great of al her payne

And after this, the story telleth vs
That she him yaue the fayre baye stede
The which she ones wan of Troylus
And eke a broche (& that was lyte l nede)
That Troylus was, she yaue this Diomede
And eke the bet from sorowe him to relene
She made him weare a peuell of her leue

I fynde eke in stories els where
Whan through ꝑ body hurt was Diomede
Of Troylus, tho wepte she many a teere
Whan that she sawe his wyde woundes blede
And that she toke to kepen him good hede
And for to healen him of his smerte
Wel sayne, I not, ꝑ she yaue him her herte

But trewly the story telleth vs
There made neuer woman more wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troylus
She sayde alas, for now is clene ago
My name in trouthe of loue for euermo
For I haue falsed one the gentyllest
That euer was, and one the worthyest

Alas, of me vnto the worldes ende
Shal nevther ben y written ne y songe
No good word, for these bokes wol me shende
I rolled shal I ben on many a tonge
Throughout ꝑ world, my bel shal be ronge
And women most wol hate me of all
Alas, that suche a caas me shulde fall

They wol sayne, in as moche as in me is
I haue hem done dishonour wela wa?
Al be I not the first that did amys
What helpeth that, to done my blame away?
But sens I se there is no better way
And that to late is nowe for me to rewe
To Diomede I wol algate be trewe

But Troylus, sens I no better may
And sens that thus departen ye and I
Yet pray I god so sende you right good day
As for the gentyllest knyght trewly
That euer I sawe, to seruen faythfully
And best can aye his ladyes honour kepe
And with that worde she braste anon to wepe

And certes you ne haten shal I neuer
And frendes loue, that shal ye haue of me
And my good worde, al shulde I liuen euer
And truely I wolde right sory be
For to sene you in aduersyte
And gyltelese I wot wel I you leue
And al shal passe, & thus take I my leue

But trewly how longe it was betwene
That she forsoke him for this Diomede
There is none auctour telleth it I wene
Take euery man nowe to his bokes hede
He shal no terme fynden, out of drede
For though that he began to wowe her soone
Or he her wan, yet was there more to done

Me me ne lyste this sely woman chyde
Further than the story wol deuyse
Her name alas, is publyshed so wyde
That for her gylte it ought enough suffyse
And if I might excuse her in any wyse
For she so sore was for her vnkouthe
I wys I wolde excuse her yet for routhe

This Troylus, as I before haue tolde
Thus dryueth forth, as wel as he hath myght
But ofte was his herte hote and colde
And namely that tyke vnyche nyght
Which on the morow she had him behyght
To come ayen, god wote ful lyte reste
Had he that nyght, nothyng to slepe him leste

The laurer crowned Phebus, ꝑ his heate,
Gan in his course aye vpwarde as he wente

To warmen of the eest see the waues weate
And Cyrces doughter songe, with freshe entēt
Whan Troylus his Pandare after sente
And on the walles of the towne they pleyde
To loke, if they can sene aught of Creseyde

Tyl it was noone, they stoden for to se
Who that there came, and euery maner wyst
That came fro ferre, they sayden it was she
Tyl that they coulden knowen him aryght
Now was his herte dull, nowe was it lyght
And thus betraped stoden for to stare
Aboute naught, this Troylus & Pandare

To Pandarus, this Troylus tho seyde
For aught I wot, before noone sikerly
Into this towne ne cometh not here Creseyde
She hath y nough to done hardely
To wynnen from her father, so trowe I
Her olde father wol yet make her dyne
Er that she go, god yeue his herte pyne

Pandarus answerde, it may wel ben certayne
And for thy let vs dyne, I the beseche
And after noone thā mayst thou come agayn
And home they go, without more speche
And comen ayen but longe may they seche
Er that they fynde that they after gape
Fortune hem bothe thinketh for to rape

(O Troylus) I se wel nowe that she
Is tarryed with her olde father so
That er she come it wol nyghe euen be
Come forth, I wol vnto the yate go
These porters ben vnkonning euermo
And I wol done hem holden vp the yate
As naught ne were, al though she come late

The day goth fast, & after that came eue
And yet came nat to Troylus Creseyde
He loketh forthe by hedge, by tree, by greue
And ferre his heed ouer the wal he leyde
And at the last he turned him, and seyde
By god I wote her meanyng nowe Pandare
Almoste ywis al newe was my care

Now douteles this lady can her goode
I wote she cometh ryding pryuely
I cōmende her wisdom by myne hoode
She wol nat maken people merely
Gaure on her whan ỳ she cōmeth, but softely
By nyght in to the towne she thynketh ryde
And dere brother, thinke not longe to abyde

We haue naught els for to don ywis
And Pandarus, nowe wyte thou trowen me
Haue here my trouth I se her, yonde she is
Heaue vp thyn eyen man, mayst thou nat se
Pandare answerde, nay so mote I the
Al wrōg by god, what saist ỳ mā where art
That I se yonde, nys but a farre cart

Alas, thou sayest right sothe (qō Troylus)
But hardely it is not al for nought
That in myne herte I now reioyce thus
It is ayenst come good, I haue a thought
Not I nat howe, but sens ỳ I was wrought
Me felte I suche a comfort dare I say
She cometh to night, my lyfe ỳ durst I lay

Pandarus answerde, it may be wel enough
And held with him, of al that euer he sayde
But in his herte he thought, and softe lough
And to him selfe ful soberly he sayde
From hasel wodde, there holy Robyn playde
Shal come al that thou abydest here
Ye, farwel al the snowe of ferne yere

The wardeyn of the yates gan to call
The folke, which ỳ without the yates were
And bad hem dryuen in her beestes all
Or al the nyght they must bleuen there
And ferre within the nyght, w many a tere
This Troylus gan homwarde for to ryde
For wel he seeth it helpeth nat to abyde

But natheless he gladded him in this
He thought he mis acounted had his day
And sayd, I vnderstonde haue al amys
For thilke nyght I laste Creseyde say
She sayd I shal ben here, if that I may
Er that the moone, o dere herte swete
The Lyon passe, out of this Fryete

For whiche she may yet hold al her byheste
And on the morowe, vnto the yate he wente
And vp & downe, by west and eke by este
Vpon the walles made he many a wente
But al for naught, his hope alway him blente
For which at nyght, in sorowe & syghes sore
He went him home, without en any more

This hope al cleue out of his herte fredde
He ne hath wheron nowe longer for to hong
But for ỳ payne him thought his herte bledde
So were his throwes sharpe, & wōder strōg
For whan he sawe that she abode so longe

He

pe nyste what he sudgen of it myght
Sens she hath broken that she him behyght

The thirde, forthe, fyfte, and syxte day
After the dayes ten, of which I tolde
Betwixen hope and drede his hert lay
Yet somwhat trustyng on her bestes olde
But whan he saw she nolde her terme holde
pe can nomore sene none other remedye
But for to shape him sone for to dye

Therwith the wicked spirite, god vs blesse
Which that men clepen woode Ialousye
Ganin him crepe, in al this heuynesse
For which because he wolde sone dye
pe ne ete ne dronke for his malancolye
And eke from euery company he fledde
This was the lyfe that al this tyme he ledde

He so defayte was, that no maner man
Vnneth him myght knowen there he wente
So was he leane, and therto pale and wan
And feble, that he walketh by potente
And with his ire he thus him selfe shente
But who so asked him who of him smerte
He sayd, his harme was al aboute his herte

Priam ful ofte, and eke his mother dere
His brethern + his sustren gan him frayne
Why he so sorowful was in al his chere
And what thing was ꝑ cause of al his payne
But al for naught, he nolde his cause playne
But sayde, he felte a greuous maladye
Aboute his herte, and sayne he wolde dye

So on a daye he layd him downe to slepe
And so byfel that in slepe him thought
That in a forest fast he walked to wepe
For sorow of her, ꝑ him these paynes wrought
And vp and downe, as he that forest sought
He mette he sawe a bore, with tuskes greate
That slept ayenst the bright sonnes heate

And by this bore, faste in her armes folde
Lay kyssyng ay his ladye bryght Creseyde
For sorow of whiche, whan he it gan beholde
And for dispite, out of his slepe he breyde
And loude he cryed on Pandarus, and seyde
O Pandarus, now know I croppe + roote
I nam but deed, there nys none other boote

My lady bright Creseyde hath me betrayde
In whom I trusted most of any wight
She els where hath nowe her herte apayde
The blysful goddes, through her great myst
Haue in my dreame ysche wed it ful right
Thus in my dreme, Creseyde haue I beholde
And al this thyng to Pandarus he tolde

O my Creseyde alas, what subtylte
What newe lust, what beaute, what science
What wrathe of iust cause haue ye to me
What gylte of me, what set experience
Hath me rafte alas, thyne aduertence
O trust, o fayth, o depe assurance
Who hath me rafte Creseyde, al my plesaunce

Alas, why let I you from hence go
For which wel nygh out of my wit I breyde
Who shal now trow on any other moo
God wote I wende, o lady bryght Creseyde
That euery worde was gospel that ye seyde
But who may her begyle, if him in lyke
Than he on whom men weuen best to tryche

What shal I done, my Pandarus alas
I fele nowe so sharpe a newe payne
Sens that there is no remedye in this cas
That her were it, I wyn my nedes remayne
My selfen slowe, that alway thus to playne
For thrugh my deth my wo shal haue an ende
There euery day with lyfe my selfe I shende

Pandare answerde + sayd, alas the while
That I was borne, haue I not sayd ere now
That dremes many a man fordon begyle
And why for folke expounden hem arwis
How darst thou sayne that false thy lady is
For any dreame, right for thyn owne drede
Let be this thought, ꝑ canst no dremes rede

Paraventure there I dreamed of this bore
It may so be that it may signifye
Her father, whiche that olde is and eke hore
Aren thrugh me lyche on peyne to dye
And she for sorowe gynneth wepe and crye
And wylleth him, there he lye on the grounde
Thus shulde I thou thy dreme arist expounde

How might I than done (qd Troylus)
To knowe of thys, yea were me lef to lyue
Nowe sayest ꝑ wysely (qd eneas Pandarus)
My rede is this, sens thou canst wel endyte
That hastely a letter thou her wryte
Through which ꝑ shale wel bringen aboute
To know a sothe, of ꝑ thou arte in doute

Fol. And

And se now why for this I dare wel sayne
That if so is, that she write we be
I can not trowen that she wol write agayne
And if she write, thou shalt ful sone yse
As whether she hath any lybertie
To come ayen, or els in some clause
If she be let, she wol assigne a cause

Thou hast not written to her sens ỳ she went
Nor she to the, and this I durste lay
There may suche cause ben in her entente
That hardely thou wolte thy selven say
That her abode the best is for you tway
Now write her than, & thou shalt fele sone
I sothe of al, there is no more to done

Acorded ben to this conclusioun
And that anon, these yike lordes two
And hastely sate Troylus adoun
And tolleth in his hert to and fro
How he may best discryuen her his wo
And to Cresseyde his owne lady dere
He wrote right thus, & sayd as ye may here

¶ The copy of the letter.

Right fresh flour, whose I haue ben & shal
Withouten parte of els where seruyce
With hert, body, lyfe, lust, thought, and al
I woful wight, in euery humble wyse
That longe can tell, or hert may deuyse
As ofte as matter occupyeth place
Me recõmaunde vnto your noble grace

Lyketh it you to weten swete herte
As ye wel know, how long tyme agon
That ye me lefte in aspre paynes smerte
Whan that ye went, of which yet bote non
Haue I non had, but euer worse bygon
Fro day to day am I, and so more dwell
While it you lyst, of wele and wo my well

For whiche to you, with dredefull hert trewe
I write, as he that sorowe driueth to write
Thy wo, that euery houre encreaseth newe
Complaynyng as I dare, or can endyte
And that defaced is, that may ye wyte
The teares, whiche ỳ from myne eyen rayne
That wolden speke, if ỳ they durst & playne

You first beseche I, that your eyen clere
To loke on this defouled ye nat holde
And ouer al this, that ye my lady dere
Wol vouche safe this letter to beholde
And by the cause eke of me, cares colde
That fleeth my wyt, if aught amys me ferne
Forgeue it me, myne owne swete herte

Yf any seruaunt durst or ought of ryght
Vpon his lady pitously complayne
Than were I that I ought be that wight
Cõsidred this, ỳ ye these monthes twayne
Haue tarved, there ye sayden sothe to sayne
But ten dayes ye nolde in hoste sojourne
But in two monthes, yet ye not retourne

But for as muche, as me more nedes lyke
Al that you lyst, I dare nat playne more
But humbly, with sorowful syghes syke
You write I myn vnesty sorowes sore
Fro day to day, desyring euer more
To knowen fully, if your wyl it were
How ye haue fared and don while ye be there

Whose welfare and heale eke god encrease
In honour suche, that vpwarde in degree
It growe alway, so that it neuer cease
Right as your herte aye can my lady free
Deuyse, I pray to god so more it be
And graunt it that ye soone vpon me rewe
As wisely as in al I am to you trewe

And if you lyketh knowen of the fare
Of me, whose wo ther may no wyt discryue
I can no more, but chefl of euery care
At writyng of this letter I was on lyue
Al redy out my woful gost to dryue
Whiche I delay, and holde him yet in honde
Vpon the syght of mater of your sonde

Myne eyen two in dayne, with which I se
Of sorowful teares salte arn worn welles
Myn songe in playnt of myne aduersyte
Myn good in harme, myn ese eke worn bel is
Myn ioye in wo, I can sey nowe nought ellis
But turned is, for which my lyfe I wary
Euery ioye or ease in his contrary

Which vb your commyng home ayen to Troy
Ye may redresse, and more a thousande syth
Than euer I had encressen in me ioy
For was there neuer hert yet so blythe
To haue his lyfe, as I shal ben as swythe
As I you se, and though no maner routhe
Can meue you, yet thynketh on your trouthe

And if so be my gylte hath de the deserued
Or if you lyst no more vpon me se

In

In guerdon yet of that I haue you serued
Beseche I you, myne owne lady fre
That herupon ye wolden wryte me
For loue of god, my right lode sterre
That deth may make an end of al my werre

Yf other cause aught doth you for to dwel
That w your letter ye may me recomforte
For though to me your absence is an hel
With patience I wol my wo comforte
And with your letter of hope I wol disporte
Now writeth swete, & let me thus nat plaine
With hope or deth, delyuereth me fro payne

Iwis myne owne dere herte trewe
I wot that whan ye nerr vpon me se
So lost haue I myn heale, & eke myne hewe
Creseyde that nat conne knowen me
Iwys myn hertes day, my lady fre
So thirsteth aye myn herte to beholde
Your beaute, that vnneth my lyfe I holde

I say no more, al haue I for to say
To you wel more than I telle may
But whether that ye do me lyue or dey
Yet pray I god, so yeue you right good day
And fareth wel goodly fayre fresshe may
As ye that lyfe or dethe me may cõmaunde
And to your trouth aye I me recõmaunde

With heale suche, that but ye reuen me
The same heale, I shal non heale haue
In you lythe, whan you lyst that it so be
The day in whiche me clothen shal my graue
And in you my lyfe, in you might for to saue
Me fro disease of al paynes smerte
And fare nowe wel myne owne swete herte.

Le vostre T.

This letter forth was sent vnto Creseyde
Of which her answere in effecte was this
Ful prouidly she wrote ayen, and seyde
That also sone as she myght ywis
She wold come, & mende al that was amys
And finally she wrote and sayde then
She wolde come, ye, but she nyst when

But in her letter made she suche festes
That wõder was, & swore she loued him best
Of whiche he founde but bremles bynettes
But Troylus thou mayst now est & west
Pype in an Ivy leefe if that the lest (chaffe
Thus goth þ world, god shylde vs fro myscha-
And euery wight þ meneth trouth auaunce

Encreasen gan the wo fro day to nyght
Of Troylus, for tarying of Creseyde
And lessen gan his hope and eke his myght
For which al down he in his bedde him leyde
He ne ete, dronke, ne slept, ne worde seyde
Imagynyng aye that she was vnkynde
For which wel nigh he were out of his mynde

This dreme, of which I tolde haue eke beforn
May neuer come out of his remembraunce
He thought aye wel, he had his lady lorn
And that Ioues, of his purueyaunce
Him shewed had in slepe the signifiaunce
Of her untrouth, and his disauenture
And þ the bore was shewed him in figure

For whiche he for Sybille his suster sente
That called was Cassandre eke al aboute
And al his dreame he tolde her er he stente
And her besought assoylen him the doute
Of the stronge bore, with tuskes stoute,
And finally, within a lytel stounde
Cassandre him gan thus his dreame expounde

She gan first smyle, and sayde o brother dere
Yf thou a sorte of this desyrest to knowe
Thou muste a fewe of olde stories here
To purpose howe that fortune ouerthrow
Hath lordes old, through which vnto a throw
Thou shalt this bore know, & of what kynde
He comen is, as men in bokes fynde

Diane, which that wroth was and in ire
For grekes nolde done her sacrifyce
Me enuens vpon her auter set on fyre
She for that grekes gan her so despise
Made her in a wonder cruel wyse
For with a bore as great as ore in stall
She made vp frete her corne and vynes all

To slee the bore was al the countrey reysed
Amonge whiche there came this bore to
A mayd, one of this world the best ypraysed
And Meleager, lorde of that countre
He loued so this fresshe mayden fre
That with his manhode, er he wolde stente
This bore he slough, and her þ heed he sente

Of which, as olde bokes tellen vs
There rose a contek and a great enuye
And of this lorde descended Tideus
By ligne, or elles olde bokes lye
But howe this Meleager gan to dye

Through his mother, wo! I you not tell
For al to longe it were for to dwell

She tolde eke howe Tideus, er the strute
Unto the stronge cyte of Thebes
(To claymen kyngdom of the cyte) went
For his felawe dan Polimites
Of which the brother dan Ethiocles
Ful wrongfully of Thebes held the strength
This tolde she by proceise al by length

She tolde eke howe Demoundes asterte
Whan Tydeus slough fyfty knyghtes stout
She tolde eke al the prophecies by herte
And how that seuen kynges with her route
Besiegeden the cyte al aboute
And of the holy serpent, and the well
And of the furyes all the gan him tell

Associat profugũ, Tideus prio Polimidem
Tidea legarum docet insidiasq; secundis
Cernus permodicu canit & vates latitantes
Deas furie Lerne quito narrãtur erãgues
Quartus habet reges meuntes prelia septem
Archynon vultum, serto ludiq; leguntur
Dat Gratos Thebes vate septimus umbris
Oranto cecidit Tideus spes vita pelagis
Ipomedon nono moritur, cum Parthonepeo
Fulmine percusso decimo Canapus superatur
Undecimo sese petimant per vulnera fratres
Arguam flentem, narrat duodenus & ignem.

Of Archimores burnyng, and the playes
And how Amphiorat fyl through þ grounde
How Tideus was slayne, lorde of Argeyes
And how Hypomedon in a lytel stounde
Was dreynt, & deed Parthonepe of wounde
And also how Campaneus the proude
With thoder dynte was slayne, þ cryed loude

He gan eke tel him howe þ eyther brother
Ethiocles and Polimites also
Ful a scarmyssche, eche of hem slough other
And of Argyues wepyng and her mo
And how þ town was brent she tolde eke tho
And tho discended downe from ieftes olde
To Diomede, & thus she spake and tolde

This silke boke betokeneth Diomede
Tideus sonne, that downe discended is
Fro Meleager, that made the bore to blede
And thy lady, where so she be ywis
This Diomede her herte hath, and she his

Wepe if thou wolte or leaue, for out of doute
This Diomede is in, and thou art oute

Thou sayest nat soth (qõ he) thou sorceresse
With al thy false golle of prophecie
Thou wenest ben a great deuyneresse
Howe seest thou nat this foole of fantasye
Payned her on ladyes for to lye
Away qõ he there Joues yeue the sorowe
Thou shalt be fals paraũture yet to morow

As wel thou mightest lyen on good Ieeste
That was of creatures but men lye
That euer weren, kyndest and the beste
For whan her husbonde was in ieopardye
To dye him selfe, but if she wolde dye
She chese for him to dye, & gon to hel
And starfe anon, as vs the bokes tell

Cassandre goth, and he with cruel herte
Forwate his wo, for angre of her speche
And from his bedde all sodainly he sterte
As though al hole him had ymade a leche
And day by day he gan enquire and seche
Al sothe of this, with al his ful cure
And thus he dryueth forth his auenture

Fortune, whiche that permutacion
Of al thinges hath, as it is her committed
Through purueyaunce and disposycion
Of hygh Joue, as reignes shal ben flytted
Fro folk i folk, or whã they shal ben smytted
Gan pul away the fethers bright of Trope
Fro day to day, tyl they ben bare of ioye

Amonge al this, the fyne of the ieoperdy
Of Hector gan approchen wonder blyue
The fate wolde his soule shulde vnbodye
And shapen had a meane it out to dryue
Ayenst which fate him helpeth not to stryue
But on a day to fyghten gan he wende
At which alas, he caught his lyues ende

For which me thinketh euery manet wight
That haunteth armes, ought to be wayle
The deth of him that was so noble a knyght
For as he drough a kynge by thauentayle
Unware of this, Achilles through the mayle
And through the body gan him for to ryue
And thus þ worthy knyght was refte of lyue

For whome as olde bokes tellen vs

Was

was made suche wo, ỹ tonge it may nat tell
And namely the sorowe of Troylus
That next hym was of worthynesse the wel
And in thys wo gan Troylus to dwel
That what for sorowe, loue, and for vnreste
Ful oft a day he bad hys herte breste

But natheles, though he gon him dispayre
And drede aye that his lady was vntrewe
Yet aye on her hys herte gan repayre
And as these louers done, he sought ay newe
To gete ayen Creseyde bryght of hewe
And in his hert he wente her excusyng
That Calcas caused al her tarying

And oft tyme he was in purpose greate
Him seluen lyke a pylgrim to disgyse
To sene her, but he may nat counterfeate
To ben vnknowen of folke that weren wise
Ne fynde excuse aryght that may suffyce
If he amonge the grekes knowen were
For whiche he wepte ful oft many a teere

To her he wrote yet oft tyme al newe
Ful pytously, he lefte it nat for slouthe
Besechyng her, sens that he was trewe
That she wol come ayen & holde her trouthe
For which Creseyde vpon a day for routh
I take it so, touchyng al thys matere
Wrote him ayen, and sayd as ye may here

Cupides sonne, ensample of goodlyhede
O swerde of knyghthode, fours of gentilesse
How might a wight in turment and in drede
And healeles you sende, as yet gladnesse
I herteles, I sicke, I in distresse
Sens ye with me, nor I with you may deale
You neither sende I herte ma y nor heale

Your letters ful the paper al vp layned
Conceyued hath myn hertes pyte
I haue eke sene with teeres al depayned
Your letter, and howe that ye requiren me
To come ayen, whiche yet ne may not be
But why, leste that this letter founden were
No mencion me make I nowe for fere

Greuous to me god wote is your vnreste
Your harde, and that the goddes ordynaunce
It semeth nat ye take it for the beste
Nor other thyng nys in your remembraunce
As thynketh me, but onely your pleasaunce
But beth nat wroth, and that I you beseche
For that I tary is al for wicked speche

For I haue herde wel more then I wende
Touchyng vs two, how thiges haue stonde
Whiche I shal with dissymulyng amende
And beth nat wroth, I haue eke vnderstode
Howe ye ne do but holden me in honde
But nowe no force, I can nat in you gesse
But al trouthe and al gentylnesse

Come I wol, but yet in suche disioynte
I stonde as nowe, ỹ wot nere, or what day
That this shal be, that can I not apoynte
But in effecte I pray you as I may
Of your good wordes, & of your frendshyp ay
For trewely whyle that my lyfe may dure
As for a frende ye may in me assure

Yet pray I you on yuel ye ne take
That it is shorte, which that I to you wrote
I dare nat there I am wel letters make
Ne neuer yet ne couthe I wel endite
Eke greate effecte, men wryte in place lyte
Thentente is al, and nat the letters space
And fareth wel, god haue you in his grace.

This Troylus thought this letter al straunge
Whan he it sawe, and sore of hit he sight
Him thought it like a kalendes of eschaunge
But fynally he ful ne trowen might
That she ne wolde him holden that she hight
For with ful yuel wyl lyste hym to leue
That loueth wel i such case thous him greue

But natheles, men sayn that at the laste
For any thyng, men shal the sothe se
And suche a cas betyde, and that as faste
That Troylus wel vnderstode that she
Was nat so kynde, as that her ought be
And fynally he wrote nowe out of doute
That al is leste, that he hath ben aboute

Stode on a day in his melancolye
This Troylus, and in suspecion
Of her, for whom he wende to dye
And so befyl, that throughout Troye town
As was the gyse, whyche was vp and down
A maner cote armoure, as sayth the storye
Before Delphebe, in signe of his victorye

The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius
Delphebe it had reuen fro Diomede
The same day, and when this Troylus

It sawe, he gan to taken of it hede
Iursyng of the length and of the brede
And al the werke, but as he gan beholde
Ful sodayne ly his herte gan to colde

As he that on the coler fonde within
A broche, that he Creseyde yaue at morowe
That she from Troye muste nedes twyn
In remembraunce of hym, and of his sorowe
And she him sayde aye on her fayth to borowe
To kepe it aye, but nowe ful wel he wyste
Hys lady nas no lenger on to tryste

He gothe hym home, and gan ful sone sende
For Pandarus, and al this newe chaunce
And of this broch he tolde him worde & ende
Complayning of her hertes varyaunce
His longe loue, his trouth, and his penaunce
And after dethe, without wordes more
Ful faste he cryed, his reste him to restore

Than spake he thus, O lady myn Creseyde
Where is your fayth, & wher is your behest
Wher is your loue, where is your trouth he
Of Diomede haue ye now al this fest (seide
Alas, I wolde haue trowed at the lest
That sens ye nolde in trouthe to me stonde
That ye thus nolde haue holden me in honde

Who shall nowe trowen on any othes more
Alas I neuer wolde haue wende er this
That ye Creseyde coulde haue chaunged so
Ne but I had agylte, and done amis
So cruel wende I nat your herte ywis
To slee me thus, alas your name of trouthe
Is nowe forlone, and that is al my routhe

Was there none other broche you lyste lete
To feste with your newe loue (quod he)
But thylke broche that I with teeres wete
You yaue, as for a remembraunce of me
None other cause alas, ne had ye
But for dispite, and eke for that ye mente
Al vtterly to shewen your entente

Thrugh which I se, ye clene out of your minde
Ye haue me caste, and I ne can nor may
For al this worlde, within myn herte fynde
To vnlouen you a quarter of a day
In cursed tyme I borne was welaway
That you that done me al this wo endure
Yet loue I best of any creature

Now, god (quod he) me sende yet the grace
That I may meten with this Diomede
And trewely, if I haue myght and space
Yet shal I make I hope his sydes bleede
Nowe god (quod he) that aughtest taken hede
To forthren trouthe, and wronges to punice
Why nilt thou don a vengeaunce of this vice

O Pandarus, that in dremes for to tryste
Me blamed hast, & wouldest art ofte vpbreyde
Nowe maist thou sene thy selfe, if that ye lyst
How trewe is now thy nece bright Creseide
In sondry formes (god it wote) he seyde
The goddes shewen bothe ioye and tene
In slepe, and by my dreme it is nowe sene

And certaynly, withouten more speche
From hence forthe, as forthe as I may
Myn owne dethe in armes wol I seche
I recche nat howe soone be the day
But trewely Creseyde, swete may
Whom I haue with al my myght yserued
That ye thus done, I haue it nat deserued

This Pandarus, that al these thinges herde
And wyste wel he sayd a sothe of thys
Ne nat a worde aven to hym answerde
For sory of his frendes sorowe he is
And shamed for his nece hath done amis
And stante astonyed of these causes tway
As styl as stone, o worde ne coulde he say

But at the laste thus he spake, and seyde
Me brother dere, I may do the no more
What shuld I sayne, I hate ywis Creseyde
And god it wote I wol hate her euer more
And that thou me besoughtest don of yore
Hauyng vnto myn honour ne my reste
Right no regarde, I dyd al that the leste

Yf I dyd aught, that might lyken the
It is me lefe, and of this treason nowe
God wote that it a sorowe is to me
And dredelesse, for hertes ease of you
Right fayne I wold amende it, wist I how
And fro this worlde, almighty god I pray
Delyuer her soone, I can no more say

Great was the sorowe & playnt of Troylus
But forthe her course fortune aye gan holde
Creseyde loueth the sonne of Tydeus
And Troylus mote wepe in cares colde
Such is this worlde, who so it can beholde

In eche estate is lytel herres reste
God leue vs to take it for the beste

In many cruel batayle out of drede
Of Troylus, this ylke noble knyght
(As men may in these olde bokes rede)
Was seue his knyghthod, & hys great might
And dredeles hys vre day and nyght
Ful cruelly the grekes ave abought
(And alway most this Diomede he sought

And oft tyme (I fynde) that they mette
With bloby strokes, and with wordes great
Assayeng howe her speares were whete
And god it wote, with many a cruel heate
Gan Troylus vpon hys helme to beate
But natheles, fortune it naught ne wolde
Of eyther houde that eyther dyen sholde

And if I had ytaken for to write
The armes of this ylke worthy man
Than wolde I of hys batelles endyte
And for that I to writen first be gan
Of his loue, I haue sayd as I can
Hys worthy dedes, who so wyle hem here
Rede Dares, he can tel hem al yfere

Besechyng euery lady bryght of hewe
And euery gentyl woman, what she be
Al be it that Cresseyde was vntrewe
That for that gilte ye be nat wroth with me
Ye may her gylte in other bokes se
And gladder I wolde write, if you lest
Penelopes trouthe, and good Alceste

Ne say I nat this al only for these men
But moste for women that betrayed be
Through fals folke, god yeue hé sorow amé
That with her great witte and subtylte
Betrayen you, and this meueth me
To speke, and in effecte you al I pray
Be the ware of men, & herkeneth what I say

Go lytel booke, go my lytel tragedye
There god thy maker yet er that I dye
So sende me might to make some comedye
But lytel boke, make thou none enuye
But subiect ben vnto al poesye
And kisse the steppes, wher as thou seest pace
Of vergil, Ouyde, Homer, Lucan, & Stace

And for there is so greate diuersyte
In englyshe, and in writyng of our tonge
So pray I to god, that none myswrite the
Ne the misse metre, for defaute of tonge
And redde where so thou be, or ys songe
That thou be understonde, god I beseche
But yet to purpose of my rather speche

The wrathe, as I began you for to sey
Of Troylus, the grekes boughten dere
For thousandes hys hondes maden dey
As he that was withouten any pere
Saue in his tyme Hector as I can here
But welaway, saue onely goddes wyl
Dispitously hym slough the fierce Achil

And when that he was slayn in this manere
His lyghe goste, ful blisfully is went
Up to the holownesse of the seuenth spere
In his place leryng euery the element
And there he sawe, with ful auysement
The erratyke sterres, herkenyng armonye
With sownes ful of heuynesse melodye

And downe from thence, faste he gan auyse
This lytel spote of erth that with the see
Enbraced is, and fully gan dispryse
This wretched worlde, and holde al vanite
To respecte of the playne felicite
That is in heuen aboue, and at the laste
There he was slaine, his lokyng downe he caste

And in him selfe he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his dethe so faste
And dampned al our werkes yt folowen so
The blynde lust, whiche that may nat laste
And shuldren al our herte on heuen caste
And forthe he wente, shortely for to tel
There as Mercurye sorted hym to dwel

Swiche fyne hath lo, this Troylus for loue
Swiche fyne hath al his grete worthynesse
Swiche fyne hath his estate reyal aboue
Swiche fyne his lust, swich fyne hath his prowesse
Swiche fyne hath falsé worldes brotelnesse
And thus began his louyng of Creseyde
As I haue telde, and in this wyse he deyde

O yonge freshe folkes, he or he
In which yt loue vp groweth with your age
Repayreth home from worldely vanyte
And of your herres, vp casteth the visage
To thrike god, that after his ymage
You made, and thynketh al nys but a fayre
This worlde yt passeth sone, as floures fayre,

And

And louerth hym, the whiche ꝑ right for loue
Upon a crosse our soules for to bey
First starte and rose, and sit in heuen aboue
For he wyl falsen no wight dare I sey
That wol his herte al holly on him ley
And sens he best to loue is, and moste meke
What nedeth taymed loues for to seke

Lo here of parnems, cursed olde rytes
Lo here what al her goddes may auayle
Lo here this wretched worldes appetites
Lo here the fyne and guerdon for trauayle
Of Ioue, Apollo, of Mars, & such raskayle
Lo here the forme of olde clerkes speche
In poetrye, if ye her bokes seche

O moral Gower, this boke I directe
To the, and to the philosophical Strode
To vouchsafe there nede is to correcte
Of your benignitees and zeles goode
And to ꝑ forthfast Christ that starte on roode
With al myne herte, of mercy euer I pray
And to the lorde aright, thus I speke & say

Thou one, two, and thre, eterne on lyue
That raygnest ayc in thre, two, and one
Uncircumscript, and al mayst circumscryue
Us from visible and inuisible fone
Defende, and to thy mercy euerychone
So make vs Jesus for thy mercy digne
For loue of mayde, and mother thyn benigne.

¶ Thus endeth the fyfth booke, and lasle of Troylus: and here folowerth the pyteful and dolorous testament of fayre Creseyde.

¶ The testament of Creseyde

Dolysesason tyll a careful dyte
Should corresponde, and be equipolent
Right so it was whan I began to write
This tragedy, the weder right feruent
Whan Eries in middes of the lent
Showres of hayle can fro the north discende
That frantly fro the cold I might me defende

Yet neuertheles within myne oratore
I stode, whan Titan had his beames bright
Withdrawen downe, and serled vnder cure
And fayre Uenus the beaute of the nyght
Uprayse, and sette vnto the weste ful right
Her golden face in oppositio towne
Of god Phebus direcre discendyng downe

Throughout ꝑ glasse her bemes braste so fayre
That I myght se on euery syde me by
The northren wynde had purified the ayre
And shedde his mysty cloudes fro the skye
The froste freseth, the blastes bytterly
Fro poole Arctik come whisking loud & shrl
And caused me remoue ayenst my wyl

For I trusted that Uenus louers quene
To whom somtyme I hight obeisance
My faded herte of loue the lorde make grene
And therupon with humble reuerence
I thought to pray her hye magnificence
But for great colde as than I letted was
And in my chambre to the fyre can pas

Though loue be hote, yet in a man of age
It kyndleth nat so soone as in youthed
Of whom the blode is flowyng in a rage
And in the olde, the corage dul and dred
Of whiche the fyre outwarde is best remed
To helpe by physike wher that nature fayled
I am expert, for bothe I haue assayled

I made the fyre and beaked me aboute
Than toke I drinke my spirites to comforte
And armed me wel fro the colde theroute
To cutte the wynter nyght & make it shorte
I toke a quaire, and lefte al other sporte
Writen by worthy Chaucer glorious
Of fayre Creseyde, and lusty Troylus

And there I founde after that Diomede
Receyued had that lady bright of hewe
Howe Troylus nere out of his witte abrede
And wept sore, with visage pale of hewe
For which wanhope hys teares gan renewe
Whyle esperus reioysed hym agayne
Thus whyle in ioy he stued, & whyle in payne

Of her behest he had greate comforting
Trusting to Troy ꝑ she wolde make retour
Whyche

Whiche he desired moste, of al erthly thing
For why she was his onely paramour
But whan he sawe passed both day & hour
Of her gayncome, in sorowe can oppresse
His woful herte, in care and heynesse

Of his distresse me nedeth nat reherse
For worthy Chaucer in that same boke
In goodly termes, and in holy verse
Compyled hath his cares who wyl loke
To breke my slepe another queare I toke
In which I founde the fatal destenye
Of fayre Creseyde, which ended wretchedly

Who wote if al ỳ Chaucer wrate was trewe
For I wote nat if thys narracion
Be authorysed, or forged of the newe
Of some poete by hys inuencion
Made to reporte the lamentacyon
And wofull ende of this lusty Creseyde
And what distresse she was in or she deyde

Whan Diomede had al hys appetyte
And more fulfylled of thys fayre lady
Upon another sorte was al his delyte
And sende to her a libel repudy
And her excluded fro hys company
Than desolate she walked vp and downe
As some men sayne, in ỳ courte as comune

O fayre Creseyde, the floure and a perle
Of Troy & Grece, how were thou fortunate
To chaunge in frythe al thy feminute
And be with fleshly luste so maculate
And go amonge the grekes ryly and late
So gryglotyke, takyng thy foule plesaunce
I haue pyte the shulde fal suche mischaunce

Yet neuertheles, what euer mẽ deme or say
In scornful language of thy brutelnesse
I shal excuse, as forsothe as I may
Thy womãhed, thy wisedome and fayrnesse
The which fortune hath put to such distresse
As her pleased, & nothyng through the gylte
Of the, through wicked langage to be spilte

This fayre lady on thys wyse destytute
Of al comforte and consolacyon
Right priuely without felowshyp or refute
Dishcuelde, passed out of the town
I myle or two vnto a mansyon
Bilded ful gay, whet her father Calcas
Which than amõg the grekes dwelling was

Whan her he sa'w, the cause he can enquire
Of her cõming, she sayd sighing ful sore
Fro Diomede had gotten hys desyre
He wore wery and wolde of me no more
Oõ Calcas doughter wepe ỳ nat therfore
Parauenture al cometh for the best
Welcome to me thou art ful here a gest

This olde Calcas, after the lawe was tho
Was keper of the temple as a preest
In whiche Venus and her sonne Cupydo
Were honoured, and his chambre was next
To which Creseyde vp bale enclosed in hert
Used to passe, her prayers for to say
Whyle at the lasse vpon a solempne day

As custome was, the people forth and nere
Before the noone, vnto the temple went
With sacrifyce deuout in their manere
But syl Creseyde heuy in her entent
In to the churche wolde nat her selfe present
For grynyng of the people and desyre
Of her expulse fro Diomede the kyng

But passed in to a secrete oratorie
Where she might wepe her woful destenye
Behynde her backe, the doore fast she barre
And on her knees bare fel downe in hye
Upon Venus and Cupyde angerly
She cryed out, and sayd in this wyse
Alas that euer I made you sacrifice

Ye gaue me ones a dyuerse responsayle
That I shulde be the floure of loue in Troy
Now am I made an vnworthy outwayle
And al in care transmuted is my ioye
Who shal me gyde, who shal me nowe conuoye
Sithe I fro Diomede, and noble Troylus
Am clene excluded, as abiect odious

O false Cupide, none is to wyte but thou
And the mother of loue, that blinde goddesse
Ye caused me vnderstande alway and prowe
The seede of loue was sowen on my face
And ay grewe grene throuȝ your sople grace
But now alas, that seede with frost is slayne
And I fro louers lefte and al forlayne

Whan this was sayd, downe in an ecstasy
Rauyshed in spirite, in a dreame she fel
And by apparaunce herde where she dyd lye
Cupyde the kyng synging a sirue bel
Which men might here fro heuen in to hel

At whose sounde before Cupyde aperes
The seuen planets discēding fro their speres

Whiche hath power of al thing generable
To rule and stere by their great influence
Wyder and wyde, and course variable
And first of al Saturne gaue hys sentence
Whiche gaue to Cupyde lytel reuerence
But as a boystus chorle in hys maneres
Came crabbedly with austrine loke & chere

His face frounsed, his here was lyke the lede
His teth chattred, and shuered with ỳ chin
Hys eyen drouped hole sonken in his heed
Out at his nose the mildrop fast ran syn
With lyppes blo, and chekes leane and thyn
The yse ykels ỳ fro his here downe honge
Was wōder great, and as a spere as longe

Attour his belte hys lratte lockes lay
Felted vnfayre, ouer feet with frostes hoore
His garment and his gate ful gay of gray
His widdred wede fro hi ỳ winde out wore
A boustous bowe within his honde he bore
Under his gyrdle a tasche of felone flayns
Federed with yse, and heeded wt hollayns

Than Jupiter right fayre and amiable
God of the sterres in the firmament
And norrice to al thyng generable
Fro hys father Saturne farre different
Wt burly face, and browes bright & brent
Upon hys herd a garlonde wonders gay
Of flowres fayre, as it had ben in May

His voyce was clere, as cristal was his eyen
As golden wire so glitterynge was his heare
His garment and hys gyrt ful gay of grene
With golden lystes gylte on euery geare
A burly braude about his middle he beare
And in his right hād he had a grounde spere
Of his father, the wrothe fro vs to bere

Next after hym came Mars the god of ire
Of stryfe, debate, and al discencioun
To chyde and fight, as fierce as any fire
In harde harnesse heymonde & habergioun
And on his haunch a rousty fel fauchoun
And in his handē he had a rousty swerde
Wt ebrybyng his face, with many angry worde

Shakyng his brāde, before Cupyde he come
Wt rede visage, & grysly glowyng eyen
And at his mouthe a blubber stode of fome
Lyke to a bore, whettyng his tuskes kene
Right tulsure lyke, but temperaunce in tene
In horne blew with many boustous bragge
Wt whiche al this worlde wt war re hath made (to wagge
Than fayre Phebus, lanterne & lāpe of light
Of man & beest, both fruite and floryshynge
Tender norice, and banisher of nyght
And of the worlde, causyng by his mouing
And influence, lyfe in al erthly thyng
Without cōforte of whom of force to noust
Must go dye, ỳ al this worlde hath wrought

In kyng royal, he rode vpon a chare
The which Phiton somtyme gyded vnright
The brightnesse of his face what it was bare
Non might beholde, for persyng of his sight
This golden carte with fyry beames bright
Foure yoked stedes ful different of hewe
But bayte or tiryng through the spers drewe

The first was sorde, wt mane as reed as rose
Called Eoye in to the orient
The seconde stede to name, hight Ethiose
Whitely and pale, and somdele ascendent
The thirde Perose, right hote & eke feruent
The fourthe was blacke, called Philologe
Which rolleth Phebus downe in to the see

Venus was there present, that goddes gay
Her sonnes quarel to defende and make
His owne complaynte, cladde in a nice aray
The one halfe grene, thother half sable blake
White heer as gold, kembed and shede abake
But in her face semed great barraunce
Wt pitie truth, & whiles inconstaunce

Under smyling she was dissymulate
Prouocatyue with blynkes amorous
And sodaynly chaunged and altercate
Angry, as any serpent venomous
Right pungityue with wordes odious
Thus variaunt she was who lyste take kepe
With one eye laugh, & with the other wepe

In tokening that al flesshely paramour
Which Venus hath in rule and gouernaūce
Is somtyme swete, somtyme bitter & sour
Right mutable and ful of variaunce
Medled with careful ioye & false plesaūce
Now hotte now colde, now blith, now ful of wo
Now greene as leke, now widred & ago (wo
Wtly

With boke in hand, than come Mercurious
Right eloquent and ful of rethoryc
With polyte termes and delycious
With penne and ynke to reporte al redy
Settyng songes, and synging merely
Hys hode was reed heried attour his crown
Lyke lyl a poete of the olde fashown

Bores he bare with fyne electuaries
And sugred sirupes for digestyon
Spices belongyng to the potiquaries
With many holsome swete confection
Docter in phisyke cledde in a scarlet gown
And furred wel as suche one oughte to be
Honest and good, and nat a word couth lye

Next after hym come lady Synthia
The laste of al, and swyftest in her spere
Of colour blake, busked with hornes twa
And in the myght she lysteth best rapere
Pawe as the leed, of colour nothyng clere
For al the lyght she borroweth at her brother
Titan, for of her selfe she hath none other

Her gyte was gray and ful of spottes blake
And on her brest a chorle paynted ful euen
Bearyng a busche of thornes on hys bake
Which for his theft myst clime no nere ꝑ heuē
Thus whē they gadred were ꝑ goddes seuē
Mercurius they chose d with one assent
To be for speker in the parlyment

Who had ben there and lyking for to here
His facunde tonge, and termes exquysite
Of rethoryke the practyke he myght lere
In their sermon, a preignant sentence write
Before Cupyde valing hys cappe a lyte
Upon is the cause of that vacacioun
And he anone shewde hys entencioun

To qd Cupide, who wol blaspheme ꝑ name
Of hys owne god, eyther in worde or dede
To al goddes he dothe bothe losse & shame
And shulde haue bitter parnes to his mede
I say this by yonder wretche Creseyde
The which through me was sōtyme flour of
me & my mother the stately can reproue loue

Saying of her great infelycite
I was the cause, and my mother Venus
She called a blynde goddes & might nat se
With semaunder and defame iniuryous
Thus her liuyng vncleane and lecherous
She wolde retorte in me and my mother
To who I shewde my grace aboue al other

And sithe ye are al seuen delycate
Participant of diuyne sapience
This great iniury done to our hye estate
Me thinke we payne we shuld make recōpence
Was neuer to goddes done such vyolence
As wel for you as for my selfe I say
Therfore go helpe to reuenge I you pray

Mercurius to Cupyde gaue answere
And sayd, sir kyng: my counsayle is that ye
Referre you to the hyest planet here
And take to hym the lowest of degree
The payne of Creseyde for to modyfye
As god Saturne with him take Synthia
I am content qd he to take they twa

Than thus proceeded Saturne & the Moone
When they the mater expely had decust
For the dispyte to Cupyde that he had done
And to Venus open and manyfest
In al her lyfe with payne to be oppest
And turment sore, with sickenesse incurable
And to al louers be abhominable

This doleful sentēce Saturne toke on hande
And passed down wher careful Creseide lay
And on her heed he layde a frosty wande
Than laufully on thys wyse can he say
Thy great fayrenesse, and al thy beauty gay
Thy wanton blode, & eke thy golden here
Here I exclude fro the for euermore

I chaunge thy mirthe in to melancoly
Which is the mother of al pensyuenesse
Thy mayster and thy here, in to colde & dry
Thy insolence, thy play, & thy wantonnesse
To great disease, thy pompe & thy rychesse
In to mortal nede and great penurye
Thou suffre shalt, and as a begger dye

O cruel Saturne, frowarde and angry
Harde is thy dome, and to malicious
Of fayre Creseyde, why hast thou no mercy
Whiche was so swete, gentyl, and amorous
Withdrawe thy sentence and be gracious
As ꝑ were neuer, for sheweth through thy dede
A wrekeful sentence gyuen on Creseyde

Than Cirilla, whan Saturne past away
Out of her sete, discended downe blyue

And reed a byl on Creseyde where she lay
Contaynyng this sentence diffynityue
Fro heale of body here I the depryue
And to thy sykenesse shalbe no recure
But in dolour thy dayes to endure

Thy christal eyen menged wb blode I make
Thy voice so clere vnpleasaunt heer and hace
Thy lusty lere ouerspred with spottes blake
And lumpes hawe appering in thy face
Where thou comest eche man shal flye ꝑ place
Thus shalt ꝑ go beggyng fro house to hous
With cuppe and clapper lyke a lazarous

This dooly dreame, this vgly visyoun
Brought tyl an ende, Creseyde fro it awoke
And al that courte and conuocatioun
Clanshed away, than rose she vp and toke
A polysshed glasse, & her shadowe couth loke
And whan she sawe her visage so deformate
If she in hert were wo, I ne wyte god wate

Weepyng ful sore, lo what it is (qꝺ she)
With froward langage to moue and stere
Our crabbed goddes, and so is sene on me
Wt blaspheming now haue I bought ful dere
All erthly ioye and myrthe I set arere
Alas this day, alas this wofull tyde
Whan I began with my goddes to chyde

Be this was sayd, a childe came fro the hall
To warne Creseyde the supper was redy
First knocked at the doze, and efte couth call
Madame, your father biddeth you cõe in hye
He hath marueyle so longe on grofe ye lye
And sayth your bredes bethe to long somdele
The goddes wote al your entent ful wele

Qꝺ he fayre chylde, go to my father dere
And pray him come to speke with me anon
And so he dyd, and sayd daughter what chere
Alas qꝺ she father my myrthe is gon
How so qꝺ he and she can al erpon
As I haue told, the vengeaunce, & the wrake
For her trespas, Cupide on her couth take

He loked on her vgly lepers face
The whiche before was white as lely flour
Wringyng his handes, oftymes sayd alace
That he had lyued to se that wofull hour
For he knewe wel that there was no socour
To her sykenesse, and that doubled his payne
Thus was ther care nowe betwix hẽ twaine

Whan they togider mourned had full lang
Qꝺ Creseyde, father I wold nat be kende
Therfore in secret wyse ye let me gange
To yon hospital at the townes ende
And thider some meate for charite me sende
To lyue vpon, for al myrthe in this erthe
Is fro me gone, suche is my wicked werthe

Whan in a mantyl, and a Beuer hat
With cuppe and clapper wonder priuely
He opened a secret gate and out therat
Conueyed her, that no man shulde espy
There to a village halfe a myle therby
Delyuered her in at the spyttel house
And dayly sende her part of his almous

Some knew her wel & sõe had no knowlege
Of her, bycause she was so deformate
With byles blake ouerspred in her visage
And her fayre colour faded and alterate
Yet they presumed for her hye regrate
And styl mourning she was of noble kynne
With better wyl there they toke her inne

The day passed, and Phebus went to rest
The cloudes blake ouerwheled al the skye
God wote if Creseyde were a sorowful gest
Seyng that vncouth fare and he bozye
But meate or drinke he dressed her to lye
In a darke corner of the house alone
And on this wise wepig she made her mone

Here folowyth the complaynt of Creseyde.

Soppe of sorowe sonke into care
O caytife Creseyde now and euermare
Son is thy ioy and al thy myrthe in erthe
Of al blythnesse now art thou blake and bare
There is no salue maye helpe thy sare
Fel is thy fortune, wicked is thy werthe
Thy blysse is banysshed and thy bale vnberd
Vnder the great god if I grauen ware
Where mẽ of Grece ne yet of Troy nuȝt herd

Where is thy chambre wantonly be sene
With burly bed and bankers brouded bene
Spyces and wyne to thy collatioun
The cuppes al of golde and syluer shene

Thy

Thy swete meates serued in plates clene
With sauery sauce of a good facioun
Thy gay garmentes w many goodly goun
Thy plesaunt launc pynned w golden pene
Il is arere thy great royal renoun

Where is thy gardern with thy grees gay
And ferthe floures, which y q iene floray
Had parmed plesauntly in euery pane
Where yt were wont full merily in May
To walke, & take the dewe be it was day
And here the merle and mayse many one
With ladies fayre in carolling to gone
And se the royal renkes in their ray

This leper loge take for thy goodly bour
And for thy bed, take nowe a bounch of stro
For wayled wyne and meates thou had tho
Take moulded breed, pirate, and syder sour
But cuppe and clapper is al now ago

My clere voice and my courtly carolling
Is ranke as roke, fui hidous heer and hace
Deformed is the fygure of my face
To loke on it no people hath lykyng
Seyed in sight, I say with sore sighyng
Lyng among the leper folke alas

O ladyes fayre of Troy and Grece attende
My freyle fortune, myne infelycite
My great mischefe which no ma can amende
And in your mynde a myrrour make of me
As I am nowe parauenture that ye
For al your myst may come to ỹ same ende
Or els worse if any worse may be
Beware therfore approches nere your ende

Nought is your fairnesse but a fadyng flour
Nought is your famous laude & hye honour
But wynde inflate in other mennes eares
Your rolyng reed to rotyng shal retour
Example make of me in your memore
Which of such thinges, wofull witnes beares
Il welth in erthe, as wynde away it weares
Beware therfore approchethnere your hour

Thus chidyng with her dreery destenye
Wepyng, she woke the night fro ende to ende
But al in payne her dole, her careful cry
Might not remedy, ne yet her mourning mẽde
A leper lady rose, and to her wende
And sayd, why spurnes ỹ against the wall
Co lest thy selfe, and mende nothyng at all

Sith that thy wepyng but doubleth thy wo
I counsayle the make vertue of a nede
Co lerne to clappe thy clapper to and fro
And lerne after the lawe of lepers lede
There was no bote but forth w thã she yede
Fro place to place, whyle colde & hunger sore
Compelled her to be a ranke beggore

That same tyme of Troy the garnysoun
Which had the cheftayne worthy Troylus
Throuz leoperdy of warre had slayen down
Knyghtes of Grece in nombre marueylous
With great tryumphe, and laude victorious
Agayne to Troy right royally they rode
The way where Creseyde w the leper lode

Seyng that company come all with o storm
They gaue a cry, & those cuppes good spede
O worthy lordes, for goddes loue of heuyn
To vs leper, part of your almesse dede
Than to her cry noble Troylus toke hede
Hauyng pyte, nere by the place gan pas
Where Creseyde sat, nat wetig what he was

Than vpon him she kest vp bothe her eyen
And w a blynke it come in to his thought
That he somtyme her face before had seyn
But she was in such pityr he knew her nought
Yet than her loke into his mynde he brought
The swete vysage, and amorous blemysshyng
Of fayre Creseyde, sor pyne his own destroying

No wonder was, suppose in mynde that he
Toke her fygure so soone, and so now why
The ydol of a thyng in case may be
So depe enprynted in the fantasy
That it deludeth the wyttes outwardly
And so appereth in forme and lyke estate
Within the mynde, as it was fygurate

A sparke of loue thã entred his hert couth spring
And kyndeled his body in a fyre
With hote fener, in swette, and trymbling
Pitu toke, while he was redy to expire
To beare his bryde his brest began to tyre
Within a while he chaunged many a hewe
And neuertheles nat one another knewe

For knightly pryde and memorie
Of fayre Creseyde, a gyrdel gan he take
A purse of golde, & many a gay iewel
And in the skyrte of Creseyde down can shake
Than rode away, & nat a worde he spake

Dy t. Pensyfe

Pensyfe in hert whyle he came to the towne
And for great care ofte syth almost fel downe

The lepre folke to Creseyde than couth draw
To se the equal distrybuctoun
Of ỳ almous, but whan the golde they sawe
Ech one to other priuely can rown
And sayd, you lorde hath more affectoun
Howe euer it be, vnto you lazarous
Than to vs al, we know by his almous

What lorde is yon (qõ the) haue ye no feleȝ
That doth to vs so great humanite
Yes qõ a lepre man, I knowe him wele
Sir Troylus it is, a knyght gentyl & free
Whan Creseyde vnderstode that it was he
Stykker than stele ther sterte a bytter stoũde
Throughout her hert, & fyl down to ỳ groũd

Whan she ouercome wt sighyng sore & sadde
With many a careful crye and colde atone
Now is my brest with stormy stoũdes stadde
Wrapped in wo wretch ful wyl of one
Than fel in swoun full ofte or she wold sone
And euer in her swounyng cryed she thus
O false Creseyde, & trewe knyght Troylus

Thy loue, thy laude, and al thy gentylnesse
I compted smal in my prosperite
So elated I was in wantounesse
And clambe vpon the fyckell whele so hye
Al fayth and loue I promytted to the
Was in thy selfe fekel and furious
O false Creseyde, & trewe knyght Troylus

For loue of me thou kepte countenaunce
Honest and chast in conuersacioun
Of al women protectour and defence
Thou were, and helped their opinioun
Thy mynde on fleshely foule affectioun
Was enclyned to lustes lecherous
Fye false Creseyde, o trewe knyȝt Troylus

Louers beware, and take good hede about
Whom that ye loue, for whã ye suffer parne
I let you wyt ther is right fewe throughout
Whõ ye may trust to haue trew loue agayne
Proue whã ye wol your labour is in vayne
Therfore I rede ye take them as ye fynde
For they are fad as wedercocke in wynde

Because I know the great vnstablenesse
Bittel as glasse, vnto my selfe I say
Trustyng in other as great bruttelnesse
As inconstaunt, and as vntrewe of fay
Thouȝ some be true, I wot ryȝt fewe ar they
Who tynderh truth, let him his lady ruse
None but my selfe as now I woll accuse

Whã this was sayd, wt paper she sat down
And in this maner made her testament
Here I bequeth my corse and caryoun
With wormes and with toodes to be rent
My cuppe, my clapper, and myne ornament
And al my golde, these lepre folke shal haue
When I am deed, to bury me in graue

This royal ring set with this Ruby reed
Which Troylus in dowry to me sende
To him agayne I leaue it whan I am deed
To make my careful dethe vnto him kende
Thus I conclude shortely & make an ende
My spirit I leue to Diane wher she dwelles
To walke with her in wilde wodes & welles

O Diomede thou hast both broche & belte
Which Troylus gaue me in tokenyng
Of his trewe loue, & with ỳ worde she swelte
And soone a leper man toke of the tyng.
Than buried her without tarying
To Troylus forthwith the tyng he bare
And of Creseyde the dethe he can declare

Whan he had herde her great infyrmite
Her legacy, and lamentacyoun
And howe she ended in suche pouerte
He swelte for wo and fel downe in a swoun
For sorowe his herte to brast was boun
Sighyng ful sadly sayd I can no more
She was vntrewe, and wo is me therfore

Some sayth he made a tõbe of marble gray
And wrote her name and superscriptioun
And layde it on her graue where as she lay
In golden letters, cõtaynyng this reasoun
Lo fayre ladyes, Creseyde of Troy the toun
Sometyme compted the flour of womã heed
Under this stone, late lepre lyeth deed

Now worthy women in this balade short
Made for your worthyp and instruction
Of charite I monyshe and exhort
Wynge nat your loue with false disception
Beare in your mynde this sore conclusyon
Of fayre Creseyde, as I haue sayd before
Sith she is deed, I speke of her no more.

Thus

¶ Thus endeth the pyteful and dolozous
testament of kayze Creseyde:
¶ here folowyth the legende
of good women.

¶ The legende of good women

AThousãde tymes I haue
herde men tell
That there is ioye in he-
uen and payne in hell
And I accozde it wele ỳ
it is so
But natheles yet wot I
wele also
That there nys non dwellyng in this cõtre
That eyther hath in heuen oz in hel ybe
Ne may of it none other wayes wytten
But as he herde sayd, oz founde it wzytten
For by assaye there may no man it preue
But god forbede, but men shulde leue
Well more thyng thã they han sene with eye
Ben thal nat wenen euery thyng a lye
But if him selfe it seeth, oz elis it dothe
For god wote thyng is neuer the lesse sothe
Though euery wight ne may it not yse
Bernarde the Monke ne saugh al parde
Than mote we to bokes that we fynde
(Through which ỳ olde thinges ben i mynde
And to the doctrine of these olde wyse)
Yeue credence, in euery skrilful wyse
That tellen of these olde approued stozies
Of holynes, of reignes, of victozyes
Of loue, of hate, and other sondry thynges
Of which I may not make rehersynges
And if that olde bokes were away
Yloste were of remembzaunce the kay
Wel ought vs than, honouren & beleue
These bokes, there we han none other preue
And as for me, though ỳ I can but lyte
On bokes for to rede I me delyte
And to hem yeue I fayth and ful credence
And in myne herte haue hem in reuerence
So hertely, that there is game none
That fro my bookes maketh me to gone
But it be seldome on the holy day
Saue certaynly, whan ỳ the mouth of May
Is comen, and that I here the foules synge
And that the flowres gynnen for to spzynge
Farwel my boke, and my deuotion
Nowe haue I than eke this condicion
That of al the floures in the meede
Than loue I most these flowres white & reed
Such ỳ men callen Daysies in our toun
To hem haue I so great affection
As I sayd erst, when comen is the May
That in my bedde there daweth me no day
That I nam vp, and walkyng in the meede
To seen this flowre agenst the sunne sprede
Whan it vp riseth early by the morowe
That blysful syght softeneth al my sorowe
So glad am I, whan that I haue presence
Of it, to done it al reuerence
As she that is of al floures flowre
Fulfylled of all vertue and honoure
And euer ylyke fayre, and freshe of hewe
And euer I loue it, and euer ylyke newe
And euer shal, til that myne herte dye
Al swere I not of thys, I wol not lye
There loued no wight hotter ne bet trewe
And whan that it is eue I renne blythe
Adoune as soone as euer the sunne gynneth west
To seen this flowre, how it wol go to rest
For feare of nyght, so hateth she derkenesse
Yet there is playnly spred in the brightnesse
Of the sunne, for there it wol vnclose
Alas that I ne had Englysh, ryme, oz prose
Suffysaunt, this flowre to preyse aright
But helpeth ye, that han conning and might
Ye louers that can make of sentement
In this case ought ye be dilygent
To forthren me somwhat in my labour
Whether ye ben with the lefe oz with ỳ flour
For wel I wote, that ye han herte holde
Of makyng, ropen, and lad away the colde
And I come after, gleenyng here and there
And am ful glad, if I may fynde ought ere
Of any goodly worde that ye han lefte
And though it happen me to rehersen efte
That ye han in your freshe songes sayde
Forbereth me, and bere nat ye the worse layde
Sithe that ye se, I do it in the honour
Of Loue: and eke in seruyce of the flour
Whom that I serue, as I haue wit oz myght
She is the clernesse and the very lyght
That in this derke worldome vertue leadeth
The hert, whan my sorowful brest yow dredeth
And louyth so sore, ỳ ye ben verily
The maistres of my wyt, and nothyng I
My worde, my werkes, is knit so in your bõ
That as an harpe obeyeth to the honde de

And make it sowne after his fyngerynge
Right so mowe ye out of myne hert bring
Such voice, ryst as you lust, to laugh or payne
Be ye my gyde, and lady soueraygne
As to myne erthly god, to you I call
Bothe in this werke, and my sorowes all
But wherfore that I spake to yeue credence
To olde stories, and done hem reuerence
And that men mosten more thing byleue
Than men may sene at eye, or els preue
That shal I seyne, whan that I se my tyme
I may nat al atones spekе in ryme
My best good, that thurlleth alway newe
To seme this flour so yonge, so freshe of hewe
Constrayned me, with so gredy desyre
That in myne hert I felе yet the fyre
That made me to ryse er it were day
And this was now the first morowe of May
With dredful hert, and glad deuocion
For to ben at the resurrection
Of this floure, whan that it shulde vnclose
Agayne the sunne, that rose as reed as rose
That in the brest was of the beest that day
That Agenores doughter lad away
And downe on knees anon right I me sette
And as I couthe, this freshe flour I grette
Knelyng alway, tyl it vnclosed was
Upon the smal, softe, swete gras
That was with floures swete embrouded al
Of suche swetnesse, and suche odour ouer al
That for to speke of gōme, herbe, or tre
Comparyson may noon vmaked be
For it surmounteth plainly al odoures
And of tyche beaute of floures
Forgotten had the erthe his pore estate
Of wynter, that him naked made and mate
And with his swerde of colde so sore greued
Now hath the atempre sonne all that releued
That naked was, and clad it newe agayne
The smal foules, of the reason fayne
That of the pantere and the nette ben scaped
Upon the fouler, that hem made awhaped
In wynter, and distroyed had her brood
In his dispite him thought it did him good
To synge of him, and in her songe dispyse
The foule chorle, that for his couetyse
Had hem betrayed, with his sophistrye
This was her songe: The fouler we defye
And al his crafte, and some songen clere
Layes of loue, that ioye it was to here
In worshipping and prayseyng of her make
And for the newe blysful somers sake
Upon the braunches ful of blosmes softe
In her delyte, they turned hem ful ofte
And songen, blyssed be saynt Valentyne
For on his day I chese you to be myne
Withouten repentyng, myne hert swete
And therwithal her bekes gonnen mete
Yeldyng honour, and humble obeysaunce
To loue, and dydden her other obseruaunce
That longeth vnto loue, and vnto nature
Coutrewe ỳ as you lyst, I do no cure
And tho that had done vnkyndenesse
As dothe the Tydife, for newe tangelnesse
Besought mercy of her trespasyng
And humbly songe her repentyng
And sworen on the blosmes to be trewe
So that her makes wolde vpon hem rewe
And at the last maden her acorde
Al founde they Daūger for the tyme a lorde
Yet Pyte, through his stronge gentyl myght
Forgaue, and made mercy passen ryght
Through innocence, and ruled curtesye
But I ne cleape it nat innocence folye
Ne false pyte, for bertue is the meane
As Ethyke sayth, in suche maner I meane
And thus these foules, worde of al maner
Acorded en to loue, and laften wyce
Of hate, and songe al of one acorde
Welcome somer, our gouernour and lorde
And zephirus, and Flora gentelly
Yaue to the floures softe and tenderly
Her swote breth, a made hem for to sprede
As god and goddesse of the floury mede
In whiche me thoughte I might day by day
Dwellen alway, the tolv monthe of May
Withouten slepe, withouten meate or drynke
Adowne ful softly I gan to synke
And leanyng on my elbowe and my syde
The longe day I shope me for to abyde
For nothyng els, and I shal nat lye
But for to loke vpon the dayesye
That wel by reason men it call may
The dayesy, or els the eye of the day
The emprice, and floure of floures all
I pray to god that fayre mote she fall
And al that louen floures, for her sake
But natheles, ne wene nat that I make
In prayseyng of the floure agayne the leefe
Ne more than of the corne agayne the sheefe
For as to me nys leuer none ne lother
I nam with holden yet with neuer nother
Ne I not who serueth lefe, ne who the floure
Wel brouken they her seruyce or labour
For this thing is al of another tonne
Of olde story, er suche thyng was begonne

Whan

Whan that the sonne out ỳ south gan west
And that this flour gan close, & gan to rest
For derknes of the night, ỳ which the dredde
Home to myn house ful swiftly I me spredde
To gon to rest, and erly for to ryse
To sene this flour to spredde as I deuise
And in a lytel herber that I haue
That benched was on turues freshe ygraue
I bad men shulde me my couche make
For defaute of the newe sommers sake
I bad hem strawen flowres on my bedde
Whan I was layd, and had myn eyen hedde
I fel a slepe, and slept an hour or two
Me mette how I lay in the medowe tho
To sene this floure, that I loue so & dredde
And from a ferre came walkyng in the medde
The god of Loue, and in his handes a queue
And he was clād in royal habyte grene
A fret of golde he had next her heere
And vpon that a white crowne he beere
With floreons smal, and I shal nat lye
For al the worlde right as a daysye
Ycrowned is, with white leaues lyte
So were the floreons of her crowne whyte
For of o perle fyne oriental
Her white crowne was ymaked al
For which the white crown, aboue the grene
Made her like a daysye for to sene
Considered eke her fret of golde aboue
Iclothed was this mighty god of Loue
In sylke embrouded, ful of grene greues
In whiche a fret of red rose leues
The freshest sens the worlde was first begō
His gylte heere was crowned with a son
Instede of golde, for heuynesse and weight
Therwith me thought his face shone so bright
That wel vnnethes myght I hym beholde
And in his hāde, me thought I sawe hym holde
Two fyry darres, as the gledes rede
And angelyke hys wynges sawe I spredde
And al be that men sayne, that blynde is he
Algate me thought that he myght se
For sternely on me he gan beholde
So that his lokyng dorst myn herte colde
And by the hande he held this noble queue
Crowned with white, & clothed al in grene
So womanly, so benigne, and so mete
That in this worlde though ỳ mē wold sete
Half her beaute shulde they not fynde
In creature that formed is by kynde
And therfore may I sayn as thynketh me
This songe in praysyng of thys lady fre.

Hyde Absolon thy gylte tresses clere
Hester lay thou thy meknesse al adoun
Hyde Jonathas al thy frendly manere
Eneloper, and Hercia Catoun
Make of your wyfehode no comparisoun
Hyde your beauties, Ysoude & Helayne
My lady cometh, that al this may disdayne

Thy fayre body let it not apere
Lauyne, and thou Lucrece of Rome town
And Polixene, that boughten loue so dere
And Cleopatras, with al thy passyoun
Hyde your trouthe of loue, & your renoun
And thou Tisbe, that hast of loue such payne
My lady cometh, that al this may disdayne

Hero, Dido, Laodomia, al yfere
And Phillis, hangyng for Demophoun
And Canace, espyed by thy chere
Hypsiphile betrayed with Jasoun
Make of your trouthe neyther bost ne soun
Nor Hypermistre, or Ariadne, ye twayne
My lady cometh, that al this may disdayne.

This balade may ful wel ysongen be
As I haue sayde erste, by my lady fre
For certaynly, al these mowe nat suffyse
To apperen with my lady in no wyse
For as the sonne wol the fyre disdayne
So passeth al my lady soueravne
That is so good, so fayre, so debonayre
I pray to god that ever fal her fayre
For had comforte ben of her presence
I had ben dede, wythouten any defence
For drede of Loues wordes, and his cheere
As whan tyme is hereafter ye shal here
Behynde this god of Loue vpon the grene
I sawe comyng of ladies nyne or sene
In royal habit, a ful easy pace
And after hem came of women such a trace
That sens that god Adam had made of erth
The thirde parte of mankynde, or the tenthe
Ne wende I nat by possybylyte
Had ever in this wyde worlde ybe
And trewe of loue, these women were echon
Nowe whether was it a wonder thing or non
That tyght anon, as that they gonne espye
This floure, whiche that I clepe the daysye
Ful sodaynly they stynten al at ones
And kneled downe, as it were for the nones
And songen with o voyce, heale and honour
To trouth of womanhed, and to this flour
That bereth our alder prise in tyrannye

Her whyte crowne be areth the witnessyng
And with that worde, a compas enuyroun
They sitten hem ful softly adown
First sate the god of Loue, & sithe his queene
With the white crowne, clad al in greene
And sythen al the remnaunt by and by
As they were of estate, ful curteisly
Ne nat a worde was spoken in the place
The mountenaūce of a furlonge way of space
I kneling by this floure, in good entente
Abode to knowen what this people mente
As fyl as any floure, fyl at the laste
This god of Loue, on me his eyen caste
And sayd, who kneleth there: and I answerde
Vnto his asking, whan that I it herde
And sayd, sir it am I, and come hym nere
And salued him. qd he what doest thou here
So nigh myn owne floure, so boldely
It were better worthe fremdely
I woulde to nigh nere my floure than thou
And why sir qd I and it lyke you
For thou qd he art therto nothing able
It is my relyke, digne and delytable
And thou my foe, & al my folke werreyst
And of myn olde seruaūtes thou me fayrest
And hyndrest hem, with thy translation
And lettest folke from her deuotion
To serue me, and holdest it folye
To serue Loue, thou mayst it nat denye
For in playne text, without nede of glose
Thou hast translated the Romaūt of p Rose
That is an heresye ayenst my lawe
And maked wyse folke fro me withdrawe
And of Creseyde, thou hast sayde as the lyste
That maketh men to women lesse trouste
That ben as trewe as euer was any steele
Of thyn answere am vyle the ryght weele
For though thou rymed hast my lay
As other wrecches haue done many a day
By seynt Venus, that my mother is
If that thou live, thou shalt repenten this
So cruelly, that it shal wel be seene
Tho spake this lady, clothed al in greene
And sayd, god right of your curtesye
Ye mote bethenke if he can replye
Ayenst al this, that ye haue to hym meued
A god ne shulde nat be thus agreued
But of his debte he shal be liable
And therto gracious and mercyable
And if ye were a god, that know men al
Than might it be, as I you tellen shal
This man to you may falsely ben accused
That as by right, hym ought ben excused
For in your courte is many a losengeour
And many a queynte totoler accusour
That tabouren by your eares many a soun
Right after her ymagynacioun
To haue your daliaunce, and for enuy
These ben the causes, and I shal nat lye
Enuye is lauender of the court alway
For she ne parteth neither night ne day
Out of the house of Cesar, thus saith Dant
Who so that gothe algate the wol nat want
And eke peraunter for this manis wyte
He might done it, gessyng no malyce
But for he vseth rymes for to make
Hym recketh nought of what matere he take
Or him was boden make thilke twey
Of some persone, and durst it nat withsey
Or hym repenteth bitterly of this
Or he hath nat done so grieuously amis
To translaten that olde clerkes writen
As though that he of malyce wolde endyten
Dispite of loue, & had hym self it wrought
This shuld a ryghtwise lord haue in his thought
And nat be like tyraunres of Lombardy
That han no reward but at tyranny
For he that lyng or lorde is naturel
Hym ought nat be tyraunt ne cruel
As is a lyoun, to done the harme he can
He must thynke it is his liege man
And is his tresour, and his golde in cofre
This is the sentence of the philosopher
A kynge to kepe his leges in suffyre
Without doute that is his office
Al so of he kepe his lordes in her degre
As it is right and skil, that they be
Enhaunced & honoured and moste dere
For they be halfe goddes in this world here
Yet mote he done both right to poore & ryche
Al be that her estate be nat both yliche
And haue of poore folke compassyon
For lo, the gentil kynde of the lyon
For whan a flye offendeth hym or byteth
He with his tayle away the flye smyteth
Al easely, for of his gentrye
Hym deyneth nat to wreke him on a flye
Ay bothe a cutte, or els another breid
In noble corage ought ben areed
And wayen euery thyng by equite
And euer haue regarde vnto his owne degre
For sir it is no maystrye for a lorde
To dampne a man, without answere of worde
And for a lorde, that is ful foule to vse
And it so be, he may hym nat excuse
But alwey mercy with a dredeful herte

And

And proferreth hym, right in his bare herte
To ben right at your owne iugement
Than ought a god by shorte auisement
Considre hys owne honour, and his trespace
For syth no cause of deth lieth in this cace
You ought to ben the lyghtlyer merciable
Letteth your ire, a bethe somwhat treatable
The man hath serued you of his conninges
And forthred wel your law in his makinges
Al be it that he can nat wel endyte
Yet hath he made lewde folke delyte
To serue you, in preysyng of your name
He made the boke, ỳ hight the house of fame
And eke the deth of Blaunche the duchesse
And the parliment of foules, as I gesse
And al the lour of Palamon and Arcyte
Of Thebes, though ỳ storie is knowen lyte
And many an hympne, for your holy dayes
That highten balades, rondels, virelayes
And for to speke of other holynesse
He hath in prose translated Boece
And made the lyfe also of saynt Cecile
He made also, gone is a great whyle
Ymages upon the Pantheon
Him ought nowe to haue the lesse payne
He hath made many a ley, and many a thyng
Nowe as ye be a god, and eke a kyng
Of your Alceste, whilom quene of Trace
I aske you this man right of your grace
That ye hym neuer hurte in al hys lyue
And he shal swearen to you, and that bylyue
He shal neuer more agylten in this wyse
But shal maken as ye wol deuyse
Of women trewe in lourynge al her lyfe
Whereso ye wol, of mayden or of wyfe
And forthren you, as muche as he may
Er in the Rose, or els in Creseyde
The god of Loue answerde her thus anon
Madame, qd he it is so longe agon
That I you knewe, so charytable and trewe
That neuer yet, sens the worlde was newe
To me ne founde I better none than ye
If that I wol saue my degree
I may not wol nat wernе your requeste
Al lyeth in you, doth with hym as you leste
I al forgyue without longer space
For who so reuerth a reste or doth a grace
Do it be tyme, his thanke shal be the more
And bemeth ye what he shal do therfore
Go thanke nowe my lady here (qd he)
I rose, and downe I set me on my knee
And sayd thus: Madame, the god aboue
For yelde you that the god of Loue
Haue maked me hys wrathe to forgyue
And grace so longe for to lyue
That I may knowe forthely what ye be
That haue me holpen, and put in this degre
But trewely I wende, as in thys caas
Nought haue a gilte, ne done to loue trespas
For why, a trewe man withouten drede
Hath nat to parten with a theues mede
Ne a trewe louer ought me nat to blame
Though ỳ I speke a false louer some shame
They ought rather with me for to holde
For that I of Creseyde wrote or tolde
Or of the Rose, what so more auctorisement
Al gate god wotte it was myn entent
To forthren trouthe in loue, and it chereche
And to ben war fro falsenesse and fro vyce
By whiche enlaumpé, this was my meuing
And the answerde, let be thyne arguyng
For loue ne wol not counterpleted be
In right ne wronge, and lerne that of me
Thou hast thy grace, and holde the right therto
Now wol I sayn what penaunce ỳ shal do
For thy trespace, understande it here
Thou shalt while ỳ thou lyuest yere by yere
The moste parte of the tyme spende
In makyng of a glorious legende
Of good women, maydens, and wyues
That weren trewe in lourynge al her lyues
And eke of false men that hem betrayen
That al her lyfe ne do nat but assayen
Howe many wemen they may betraye
For in your world that is now holde a game
And though the lyke nat a louer be
Spekе wel of loue, this penaunce yeue I the
And to the god of loue I shal so praye
That he shal charge his seruants by any waye
To forthren the, and wel the labour quyte
Go now thy way, thys penaunce is but lyte
And whē this boke is made, yeue it ỳ same
On my behalfe, at Eltham, or at Shene
The god of loue gan smyle, and than he sayde
Wel ofte gode be wher this be wyste or mayde
Or quene, or countesse, or of what degree
That hath so ofte penaunce yeuen the
That hast deserued sore for to smerte
But pyte renneth soone in gentle herte
That maist ful wel bethenke what the is
And I answerde, nay sir so haue I blis
No more, but that I se wel the is good
That is a trewe tale by myn hoode
(qd Loue) and thou knowest wel parde
It is be so that thou auyse the
Hast thou nat in a boke in thy chestе

The

The great goodnesse of the quene Alceste
That turned was in to a dayesye
She that for her husbonde chese to dye
And eke to gone to hel, rather than he
And hercules rescued her parde
And brought her out of hel agayne to blys
And I answerde agayne, and sayd yes
Nowe knowe I her, this is thys good Alceste
The dayesye, and in mi owne herte reste
Now trie I wel the goodnesse of this wife
That dothe after her deth, and in her life
Her great bounte doubleth her renoun
Wel hath she quit me myn affectioun
That I haue to her honre the dayesye
No wonder is though I loue her fellysye
As telleth Agaton, for her great goodnesse
Her white colowne beareth of it witnesse
For also many perles had she
As smal florons in her colowne be
In remembraunce of her, and in honour
Cibylla made the dayesye and the floure
Icrowned al with white, as men may se
And Pars vaue to her a colowne red parde
In stede of Rubies set amonge the white
Therin this quene wore red for shame alite
When she was prayed to in her presence
Than sayd Love, a ful great negligence
Was it to the, that yike tyme thou made
Of the Absolon thy tresses in balade
That thou forgete in thy songe to sette
Suth that thou art so greatly in her dette
And most wel ther shalt her be
To any woman, that in of loue be
For she taught al the crafte of trewe louyng
And namely of wyfehode the lyuyng
And al the bountes that she ought kepe
Thy lyst lytte was thylke tyme a slepe
But nowe I charge the vpon the leste
That in thy legende thou make of this weste
When thou hast other smale ymade before
And fare nowe wel, I charge the no more
But er I go, thus muche I wol the tel
Ne shal no trewe louer come in hel
These other ladyes sitting here a rowe
Ben in my balade, if thou const hem knowe
And in thy bokes, al thou shalte hem fynde
Haue hem nowe in thy legende al in mynde
I meane of hem that ben in thy knowyng
For here ben twenty thousande mo sitting
Than thou knowest, good women al
And trewe of loue, for ought that may befal
Take the intrees of hem as the leste
I more gone home, the sunne draweth weste
To paradys, with al this companye
And serue alway the freshe dayesye
At Cleopatras I wol that thou begynne
And so forthe, and my loue so shalt thou winne
For lest se nowe what man that louer be
May done so stronge a payne for loue as she
I wote wel that thou mayst nat al it tryme
That suche louers dyd in her tyme
It were to longe to reden and to here
Suffyseth me thou make in this maniere
That thou reherce of al her lyfe the great
After these olde auctours listen for to treate
For who so shal so many a storye tel
Sey shortely or he shal to longe dwel
And with that worde my bokes gan I take
And right thus on my legende gan I make.

¶ Thus endeth the prologue.

¶ Here begynneth the legende of Cleopatras Quene of Egypte.

After the dethe of Pholome the kyng
That al Egypte had in hys gouernyng
Reigned hys Quene Cleopatras
Tyl on a tyme befel there suche a caas
That out of Rome was sent a senatour
For to conquerren realmes and honour
Into the towne of Rome, as was vsaunce
To haue the worlde at her obeysaunce
And forthe to say, Antonius was his name
So fyl it, as fortune him ought a shame
When he was fallen in prosperite
Rebel vnto the toune of Rome is he
And ouer al thys the suster of Cesar
He left her falsely, or that she was ware
And wolde algates han another wyfe
For which he tok with Rome, and Cesar strife
Natheless, for al this this yike senatour
Was a ful worthy gentyl werreyour
And of his deth it was ful great damage
But loue had brought this man in such a rage
And him so nakome bounden in hys laas
And al for the loue of Cleopatras
That al the worlde he set at no value
Him thought there was nothing to him so due
As Cleopatras, for to loue and serue
Him thought that in armes for to sterue

I

In the defence of her, and of her ryght
Thys noble quene, eke loued so this knight
Through hys deserte, and for hys chiualrye
As certaynely, but if that bookes lye
He was of person, and of gentylnesse
And of discretion, and of hardynesse
Worthy to any wyght that lyuen may
And she was fayre, as is the rose in May
And for to maken shorte is the belle
She wore hys wyfe, & had hym as her selfe
The weddyng and the feste to deuyse
To me that haue ytake suche empryse
And so many a storye for to make
It were to longe, lest that I shulde slake
Of thyng that beareth more effecte & charge
For men may ouer lade a shyppe or barge
And for thy, to effecte than wol I skyppe
And al the remnaunt, I wol let it slyppe
Octauian, that wroth was of this dede
Shope hym an hoste on Antony to lede
All direct, for hys distruction
With oute Romaynes, cruel as lyon
To shyp they went, & thus I let them sayle
Antonius was ware, and wol nat fayle
To meten with these Romaynes, if he may
Tok eke hys rede, and both vpon a day
Hys wyfe and he, and al his host forth went
To shyp anone, no longer they ne stent
And in the see it happed hem to mete
Vp goth the trumpe, & for to shoute & shete
And par men hem to set on with the sonne
With grisly soune out goth the great gonne
And hertely they hurtlen al at ones
And fro ꝑ top, downe commeth ꝑ great stones
In goth the grapenel so ful of crokes
Among the ropes ran the herying bokes
In with the polaxe preseth he and he
Behynde the masse, begynneth he to fyre
And out agayne, and bruseth hem ouer borde
He sticketh hym vpon hys speares orde
He rent the sayle with hokes lyke a sythe
He bigeth the cuppe, & biddeth hem be blyth
He powreth peesen vpon the hatches slyder
With pottes ful of lyme, they goun to gyder
And thus the longe day in fight they spende
Til at the laste, as euery thyng hath ende
Antony is shent, and put hym to the flyght
And al his folke to go, that best go might
Fleeth eke ꝑ quene, with al her purple sayle
For strokes, which ꝑ wer as thicke as hayle
No wonder was, he myght it nat endure
And whan that Antony sawe that auenture
Alas, (q̄ he) the day that I was borne
Thy worshyp in this day thus haue I lorne
And for dispayre, out of his witte he sterte
And tolde hym selfe anon throughout ꝑ herte
Or that he ferther went out of the place
His wife, that coulde of Cesar haue no grace
To Egypt is fled, for drede and for distresse
But herkeneth ye that spoken of kyndenesse
Ye men that falsely forsaken many an othe
That ye wol dye, if that your loue be wrothe
Here may ye sene of women such a trouth
This woful cleopatre hath made such trouth
That there nis tonge none that may it tel
But on the morowe, she wol no lenger dwel
But made her subtel werkmen make a shryne
Of al the rubyes and the stones fyne
In al Egypt, that she couthe espye
And put ful the shryne of spycerye
And lette the corse enbaume, & forth hir ferte
This dede corse, and in the shryne it sterte
And nere the shryne a pit than dolue she grete
And al the serpentes that she myght gete
She put hem in that grete, & thus she seyde
Now loue, to who my sorowful hert obeyde
So feithfully, that fro that dissolut
That I you swore, to ben al frely yolut
I meane you, Antonius my knyght
That neuer wakyng in the day or nyght
Ye were out of myn hertes remembraunce
For wele or wo, for carole, or for daunce
And in my selfe, this couenaunt made I fast
That right suche as ye fonden me at last
As ferforth as it in my power lay
Vnreprouable vnto my wyfhode day
The same wolde I fro myne herte dryue
And thilke couenaunt, to this me lasteth yet
I wol fulfyl, and that shal wel be sene
Was neuer vnto her loue a trouer quene
And with ꝑ word, naked with ful good herte
Among the serpentes in the pit she sterte
And there she chese to haue her buriyng
Among the nedres, rather than lyuyng
And she her deth receyueth with good chere
For loue of Antony that was her so dere
And thus is Dorat, for be it nis no fable
Howeuer I fynde a man thus trewe & stable
And wol for loue his deth so frely take
I pray god let our hertes neuer ake.

Here endeth the legende of Cleopatras,
and here folowyth the legende of
Cytee of Babylone.

AT Babiloyne whylom fyl it thus
The whiche towne the quene Semiramus
Let dichen al about, and walles make
Ful hye, of harde tyles wel ybake
Ther were dwellyng in this noble town
Two lordes, which þ were of great renown
And wonedden so nigh vpon a greue
That ther nas but a stone wal hem bytweue
As oft in great townes is the wonne
And sothe to sayne, that one man had a sonne
Of al that londe, one of the lustyest
That other had a doughter, the fayrest
That estward in þ world was tho dwelling
The name of euetyche, gan to other spring
By women that were neyghbours aboute
For in that countre yet withouten doute
Maydens ben ykepte for iclousye
Ful strayte, lest they bydden some folye
This yonge man was cleped Piramus
Tysbe hight the mayde (Ouide so sayth thus)
And thus by reporte, was her name yshoue
That as they were in age, so were her loue
And certayne, as by reason of her age
Ther might haue ben betwixt hem mariage
But that her fathers nolde it nat assent
And bothe wloue ylyke sore they brent
That none of al her frendes might it lette
But priuely somtyme yet they mette
By sleyght, and spaken some of her desyre
As wite the glede, and hotter is the fyre
Forbyd a loue, and it is ten tymes so wode
This wal, which þ bytwixt hem both stode
Was clouen a two, right fro the top adoun
Of olde tyme, of hys foundacioun
But yet thys clifte was so narowe and lyte
It was nat sene, dere ynough a mytte
But what is that, that loue can not espye
Ye louers two, if that I shal nat lye
Ye founden fyrst thys lytle narowe clifte
And with a sounde, as softe as any shrifte
They let her wordes through the clifte pace
And tolden, while þ they stoden in the place
Al her complaynt of loue, and al her wo
At euery tyme whan they durste so
On that one syde of the wal stode he
And on that other syde stode Tysbe
The swete sowne of other to receyue
And thus her wardeyns wold they disceyue
And euery day this wal they wolde threte
And wyshe to god, that it were do'one ybete
Thus wolde they sayne, alas þ wicked wal
Through thyn enuye, thou vs letteſt al
Why nyl thou cleaue, or fallen al a two
Or at the leste, but thou woldeſt so
Yet woldeſt thou but ones let vs mete
Or ones that we might kyssen swete
Than were we cured of our cares colde
But natheleſſe, yet be we to the holde
In as muche as thou suffreſt for to gone
Our wordes throuz thy lyme & eke thy stone
Yet ought we with the ben wel apayde
And whan these ydle wordes were sayde
The colde wal they wolden kysse of stone
And take her leaue, & forth they wolden gone
And this was gladly in the euentyde
Or wonder erly, lest men it espyde
And longe time they wrought in this manere
Tyl on a day, whan Phebus gan to clere
Aurora with the stremes of her here
Had dried vp the dewe of herbes were
Vnto this clyfte, as it was wonte to be
Come Piramus, and after come Tysbe
And plighten trouthe, fully in her fay
That ylke same night to stele away
And to begyle her wardeyns euerychone
And forth out of the citee for to gone
And for the feldes ben so brode and wyde
For to mete in o place at o tyde
They set markes, her metynges shulde be
Ther kyng Ninus was grauen, vnder a tree
For olde payments, that ydolles hetyed
Vseden tho in feldes to ben buried
And faste by his graue was a wel
And shortly of this tale for to tel
This couenaunt was affirmed wonder faste
And longe hem thought that the sonne laste
That it nere gone vnder the see adoun
This Tisbe hath so great affectioun
And so great lykyng Piramus to se
That whan she sawe her tyme might be
At myght she stale away ful priuely
With her face ywimpled subtelly
For al her frendes (for to saue her trouthe)
She hath forsake alas, and that is routhe
That euer woman wolde be so trewe
To trusten man, but she the bet hym knewe
And to the tre she goth a ful good pace
For loue made her so hardy in this case
Vnd by the welle, adowne she gan her dresse
Alas, than cometh a wylde lyonesse
Out of the wode, withouten more arrest
With bloody mouthe, of straugling of a beest
To

To drinken of the wel there as she sat
And whan that Tisbe had espyed that
She tyst her vp, with a ful dreery herte
And in a cane, with dredful sore she sterte
For by the moone she sawe it wel withall
And as she ran, her wymple let she fall
And toke none hede, so sore she was a wha-
And eke so glad that she was escaped (ped
And thus she sat, and lurketh wonder stil
Whan that this lyonesse hath dronke her fyl
Aboute the wel gan she for to wynde
And right anon the wymple gan she fynde
And with her bloody mouth it al to rente
Whan this was done, no lenger she ne stente
But to the wodde her way than hath she nome
And at the last this Piramus is come
For al to longe alas at home was he
The moone shone, men might wel yse
And in his way, as that he come ful fast
His eyen to the grounde adowne he cast
And in the sonde, as he beheld adoun
He saw the steppes brode of a lyoun
And in his herte he sodaynly agrose
And pale he were, therwith his herte arose
And nere he came, & founde the wymple torne
Alas (q he) the day that I was borne
This o wyght wol both vs louers slee
How shulde I aske mercy of Tisbee
Whan I am he that haue you slayne, alas
My wedding hath you slayne in this caas
Alas, to wedde a woman gone by wyght
In place there as peryll fallen myght
And I so slowe, alas I ne had be
Here in this place, a furlonge way er ye
Now what lyoun that is in this forest
My body mote he rente, or what best
That wylde is, gnawen mote he myne herte
And with ỳ worde, he to the wymple sterte
And kyste it ofte, & wepte on it ful sore
And sayd wymple alas, there nys no more
But thou shalt fele as wel the blode of me
As thou haste felte the bledyng of Tysbe
And ỳ that worde, he smote him to the herte
The blode out of the wounde as brode sterte
As water, whan the conduyte broken is
Now Tisbe, whiche that wyste nat thys
But stirring in her drede, she thought thus
I fur so fall that my Piramus
Be comen hyther, and may me nat yfynde
He may me holden false, and eke vnkynde
And out she cometh, & after him gan espyen
Both with her herte, and with her eyen
And thought, I wol him tellen of my drede
Both of the lyonesse and of my dede
And at the last her lone than hath she founde
Beatyng with his herles on the grounde
Al bloody, and ther withal abasshe she sterte
And lyke the wawes, quappe gan her herte
And pale as bore she wexe, and in a throwe
Auysed her, and gan him wel to knowe
That it was Piramus her herte dere
Who couldе wryte wyche a dredly chere
Hath Tisbe nowe, & how her heere she rente
And how she gan her selfe to turmente
And how she lyeth & swowneth on the groũde
And how she wept of teres full his woũde
How medleth she his blod, & her complaynt
How with her blod, her selfen gan she paynt
Howe clyppeth she the cold corse, alas
How doth this woful Tisbe in this caas
Howe kysseth she his frosty mouth so colde
Who hath don this? who hath be so bolde
To slee my lefe, o spake Piramus
I am thy Tisbe, that the calleth thus
And therwithal she lyfteth vp his hed
This woful man, that was nat fully ded
Whan that he her herde the name of Tisbe crye
On her he cast his heuy dedly eye
And doune again, & ye deth vp he gaspe
Tisbe rist vp, without more delaye
And sawe her wymple and his empty scabbe
And eke his swerde, where him hath don wo
Than spake she thus, thy wofull Tisbe al so
Is stronge enough in suche a wofull caas
For lone shal yeue me strength & hardynesse
To make my woũde large enough & gresse
I wol the folowen deed and I wol be
Felaw, & cause eke of thy deth, al be
And though that nothyng save the deth only
Might the fro me departe trewly
Thou shalte no more departe now fro me
Than fro the deth, for I wol go with the
And nowe ye wretched lyouns fathers oure
We that were whylom children your
We prayen you, withouten more delaye
That in o graue we moten lye
Sith lone hath brought vs this pytous ende
And right wise god to euer louer sende
That loueth trewly more prosperite
Than euer had Piramus and Tisbe
And let no gentyl woman her assure
To putten her in suche an aventure
But god forbyd but a woman can
Ben as true and lovyng as a man
And for my parte, I shal anon it kyth
And with ỳ worde, his swerd she toke swyth

That warme was of her loues blood, a bote
And to the herte the her selues smote
And thus are Tisbe and Piramus ago
Of trewe men I fynde but fewe mo
In al my bokes, saue this Piramus
And therfore haue I spoken of him thus
For it is deynte to vs men to fynde
A man that can in loue be trewe and kynde
Herte may ye fese, what louer so he be
A woman dare, and can as wel as he.

Here endeth the legende of Tysbe of Babylone, and here foloweth the legende of Dido quene of Cartage

Lorde honour Virgyle Mantuan
Be to thy name, and I shal as I can
Folowe thy lanterne, as thou gost before
How Eneas to Dido was forsworne
In thyn Eneyde, and Naso wol I take
The tenour and the great effectes make
Whan Troye brought was to distruction
By grekes sleyght, and namely by Synon
Farwel the horse offred vnto Pallerue
Through which many a Troyan must sterue
And Hector had after his dethe apered
And bad vs fle, it might nat ben atered
That the noble route of Ilion
That of the eyre was the chefe dongeon
And al the countre was so lowe ybrought
And Priamus the kyng foredone & nought
And Eneas was charged by Venus
To fleen away, he toke Ascanyus
That was his son, in his right hand a fledde
And on his backe he bare, and with him ledde
His olde father, cleped Anchyses
And by the hond his wife Creusa he ches
And mokel sorow had he in his minde
Er that he couthe his felawshyp fynde
But at the last, whan he had hem founde
He made him redy, in a certayne stounde
And to the see ful fast he gan him hye
And sayleth forth, with al his companye
Towarde Italye, as wolde destynee
But of his auentures in the see
Nys nat to purpose for to spake of here
For it accordeth nat to my matere
But as I sayd, of hym and of Dido
Shal be my tale, tyl that I haue do
So longe he sayled in the salte see
Tyl in Libye vnneth arryued he
So was he with the tempest al to shake
And whan that he the hauen had take
He had a knyght was called Achates
And him of al his felowshyp he ches
To gone with him, the countrey for tespye
He toke with him nomore companye
But forth they gon, & left his shyppes ryde
His feere and he, withouten any gyde
So longe he walketh in this wildernesse
Tyl at the last he mette an huntresse
A bowe in honde, and arowes had she
Her clothes cutted were vnto the knee
But she was yet the fayrest creature
That euer was yformed by nature
And Eneas and Achates she grette
And thus she to hē spake, whā she hem mette
Sawe ye nō she as ye han walked wyde
Any of my systren walke you besyde
With any wylde bore, or other beest
That they haue hunted to in this forest
Iclucked vp, with arowes in her caas
Nay sothly lady quod this Eneas
But by thy beautie, as it thynketh me
Thou myghtest neuer erthly woman be
But Phebus sustter art thou, as I gesse
And if so be that thou be a goddesse
Haue mercy on our labour and our wo
I nam no goddesse sothly nō she tho
For maydens walken in this countre here
With arowes & with bowe, in this manere
This is the realme of Libye, there ye bene
Of whiche that Dido lady is and quene
And thorly tolde al the occasyon
Why Dido came into that region
Of whiche as nowe me lysteth nat to ryme
It nedeth nat, it were but losse of tyme
For this is al and some, it was Venus
His owne mother, that spake with him thus
And to Cartage he bade he shuld him dight
And vanished anon out of his syght
I couthe folow worde for worde Virgyle
But it wolde lasten al to longe whyle
This noble quene, that cleped was Dido
That whylom was the wyfe of Sychee
That fayrer was than the bright sonne
This noble towne of Cartage hath begonne
In whiche she reigneth in so great honour
That she was holde of al quenes flour
Of gentylesse, of freedom, & of beautee
That wel was him, that might ones see

Of kynges and lordes so desyred
That al the worlde her beautyhad yfyred
She stode so wel in euery wightes grace
Whan Eneas was come vnto the place
Vnto the mayster temple of al the toun
There Dido was in her deuocioun
Ful priuely his way than hath he nome
Whan he was in the large temple come
I can not sayne, if that it be possyble
But Venus had him maked inuisible
Thus sayth the boke, without en any lees
And whan this Eneas and Achates
Hadden in this temple ben ouer all
Than founde they depaynted one wall
How Troye & al the lande distroyed was
Alas that I was borne (qd Eneas)
Through ꝑ world our shame is kydde so wyde
So were it is paynted vpon euery syde
We that weren in prospecte
Ben now disclaundred, and in suche degre
No lenger for to lyuen I me kepe
And with ꝑ worde, he braist out for to wepe
So tenderly, that routhe it was to seue
This freshe lady, of the cyte quene
Stode in the temple, in her estate royal
So richely, and eke so fayre withall
So yonge, so lusty, with her eyen glade
That if that god, ꝑ heuen and erthe made
Wold haue a loue, for beaute & goodnesse
And womanhede, trouthe, & semelynesse
Whom shuld he louen, but this lady swete
There nys no woman to him halfe so mete
Fortune, ꝑ hath the world in gouernaunce
Hath sodainly brought in so new a chaūce
That neuer was there yet so freend a caas
For al the company of Eneas
Which ꝑ we wende haue loste in the see
Inuyed is nought ferre fro that cyte
For which the greatest of his lordes, some
By auenture ben to the cyte come
Vnto that same temple for to seke
The quene, and of her socour her beseke
Such renōe was ther spr̄ng of her goodnesse
And whan they had tolde al her distresse
And al her tempest and al her harde caas
Vnto the quene appered Eneas
And openly beknewe that it was he
Who had ioy than, but his meyne
That hadde fōūde her lorde, her gouernour
The quene sawe they dyd hym such honour
And had herde ofte of Eneas, er tho
And in her hert had routhe and wo
That euer such a noble man as he
Shal ben dispersed in suche degree
And sawe the man, ꝑ he was lyke a knyght
And sufficaunt of person and of myght
And lyke to ben a verry gentylman
And wel his wordes he beset can
And had a noble vysage for the nones
And formed wel of brawne and of bones
And after Venus had suche fayrnesse
That no man might be halfe so fayre I gesse
And wel a lorde him semed for to be
And for he was a straūger, somwhat she
Lyked him the bet, as god do boote
To some folke, often ne we thynge is swote
Anon her hert hath pyte of his wo
And with pyte, loue came also
And thus for pyte and for generyne
Refreched must he ben of his distresse
She sayde certes, that she sory was
That he hath had suche perel & such caas
And in her frendly speche, in this maner
She to him spake, & sayd as ye may here.
We ne nat Venus sonne and Anchises
In good fayth, al the worshyp and encrees
That I may goodly done you, ye shal haue
Your shyppes and your meyne shal I saue
And many a gentyl worde she spake him to
And comaunded her meschaūgers to go
The same day without any taryle
His shyppes for to seke, and hem vitayle
Ful many a beest she to the shyppes sent
And with the wyne she gan hem to present
And to her royal paleys she her spedde
And Eneas alway with her she ledde
What nedeth you the feestes to deuyse
He neuer better at ease was in his lyue
Ful was the feast of deintees and richesse
Of instrumentes of songe, and of gladnesse
And many an amorous lokyng and desyre
This Eneas is come to Paradise
Out of the swolowe of hel, & thus in ioye
Remembreth him of his estate in Troye
To dausyng chambres ful of parementes
Of riche beddes, and of pauementes
This Eneas is ledde after the meete
And with the quene whan that he had sete
And spyces paried, and the wyne agon
Vnto his chambre was he lad anon
To take his ease, and for to haue his reste
With al his folke, to done what so him leste
There nas courser wel ybridled none
He stode for the iustyng wel to gone
Ne large paustrey, eaby for the nones
Ne wel stuffed of riche stones

Ne tubbes ful of golde, of large wyght
Ne ruby none that shyneth by nyght
Ne gentyl hauten faukon heronere
Ne hounde for herte, wilde boze, or deere
Ne cuppe of gold, with flozeyns newe ybette
That in the londe of Libye may ben gette
That Dido ne hath Eneas it ysent
And al is payed, what that he hath spent
Thus cā this honorable quene her gestes cal
As she that can in fredom passen all
Eneas sothely eke, without lees
Hath sent to his shyppe by Achates
After his sonne, and after riche thinges
Both ceptre, clothes, broches, and eke ringes
Some for to weare, and some to presente
To her, that al these noble thynges him sente
And bad his sonne howe that he shulde make
The presentyng, and to the quene it take
Repayred is this Achates agayne
And Eneas ful blysful is and fayne
To seen his yong sonne Iscanyus
For to him it was reported thus
That Cupido, that is the god of loue
At prayer of his mother hie aboue
Had the lykenesse of the childe ytake
This noble quene enamoured for to make
On Eneas, but of that scripture
Be as be may, I make of it no cure
But soth is this, ꝑ quene hath made suche
Unto this child, ꝑ wonder was to here, chere
And of the present that his father sent
She thanked him ofte in good entent
Thus is this quene in pleasaunce and ioye
With al these newe lusty folke of Troye
And of the dedes hathe she more enquired
Of Eneas, and al the story ierred
Of Troy, and al the longe day they tweyn
Entendeden for to speke and for to pleyn
Of whiche there gan to breden suche a fyre
That sely Dido hath nowe suche desyre
With Eneas her newe gest to deale
That she lost her hewe and eke her heale
Nowe to the effecte, nowe to the fruite of all
Why I haue tolde this story, and tellen shall
Thus I begynne, it fell upon a nyght
Whan that the moone vpreysed had her light
This noble quene unto her rest wente
She sigheth sore, and gon her selfe turmente
She walketh, waloweth, & made many braide
As done these louers, as I haue herde sayde
And at the last, unto her sustet Anne
She made her mone, & right thus spake she thā
Now dere sustet myn, what may it be
That me agasteth in my dreame (qō she)
This ylke newe Troyan is so in my thought
For that me thynketh he is so wel ywrought
And eke so lykely to ben a man
And therwith so mykel good he can
That al my loue and lyfe lythe in his cure
Haue ye nat herde him tell his auenture
Nowe certes Anne, if that ye rede me
I wol fayne to him ywedded be
This is the effecte, what shuld I more seyne
In him lythe al, to do me lyue or deyne
Her sustet Anne, as she ꝑ coulde her good
Said as her thought, & somdele it withstode
But hereof was so longe a sermonyng
It were to longe to make rehersyng
But fynally, it may nat be withstonde
Loue wol loue, for no wight wol it wonde
The dawnyng up ryst, out of the see
This amerous quene chargeth her meyne
The nettes dresse, and speares brode & kene
In huntyng wol this lusty freshe quene
So pricketh her this newe iolyte wo
To horse is al her lusty folke ygo
Unto the courte the houndes ben ybrought
And up on courser swyfte as any thought
Her yong knyghtes heuen al aboute
And of her women eke an huge route
Upon a thicke palfray, paper whyte
With sadel reed, embrouded with delyte
Of golde the barres, up enbossed hygh
Sate Dido, al in golde and perrey wigh
And she is fayre, as is the bright morowe
That healeth sycke folkes of nightes sorowe
Upon a courser, startlyng as the fyre
Ben myght turne him with a lytel wyre
But Eneas, lyke Phebus to deuyse
So was he freshe arayed in his wyse
The fomy bridel, with the bytte of golde
Gouerneth he right as him selfe hath wolde
And forth this noble quene, this lady ryde
On huntyng, with this Troyan by her syde
The heerde of hartes, founden is anon
With hey gobet, pricke thou, let gon, let gon
Why nyl the lyon comen or the beare
That I might him ones meten with this speare
Thus sayne thys yonge folke, & up they kest
The wylde hartes, and haue hem at her west
Amonge al this, to romblen gan the heuen
The thonder rored with a grisly steuen
Down come ꝑ rayne, with hayle & fler so fast
With heuens fyre, that made so sore agast
This noble quene, and also her meyne
That eche of hem was glad away to flye

And shortly fro the tempest her to saue
She fled her selfe, in to a lytel caue
And with her went this Eneas also
I not with hem if there went any mo
The auctoure maketh of it no mencion
And here began the depe affection
Betwyx hem two this was the first morow
Of her gladnesse, & gynnyng of her sorowe
For there hath Eneas ykneled so
And tolde her al his hurt and al his wo
And swore so depe to her to be trewe
For wel or wo, and chaunge for no newe
And as a false louer, so wel can playne
That sely Dido rewed on his payne
And toke him for husbōd, & became his wyfe
For euermore, while that hem lasti lyfe
And after this, whan that the tempest stynte
With myrth out as they came, hom they wēt
The wicked fame vp rose, and that anon
Howe Eneas hath with the quene ygon
Into the caue, and demed as hem lyst
And whan y kyng, y Yarbas hight it wyst
As he that had her loued euer his lyfe
And wowed her to haue to his wife
Such sorow as he hath maked, & such chere
It is a ruthe and pyte for to here
But as in loue, alday it happeth so
That one shal laughen at anothers wo
Nowe laugheth Eneas, and is in loue
And more richesse, than euer was in Troye
O sely woman, ful of innocence
Ful of pyte, of truthe, and conscience
What maked you to men to trusten so
Haue ye such routhe vpon her fayned wo
And haue such olde ensamples you before
Se ye nat al howe they ben forsworne
Where se ye one, that he hath lafte his lefe
Or ben vnkynde, or done her some mischefe
Or pylled her, or bosted of his dede
Ye may as wel it sene, as ye may rede
Take hede now of this great gentylman
This Troyan, that so wel her pleasē can
That fayneth him so trewe and obeysyng
So gentyl, and so priuy of his doyng
And can so wel done al his obeysaunce
To her, at festes and at daunce
And whan she goth to temple, & home agayn
And fasten tyl he hath his lady seyn
And beaten in his deuises for her sake
Nor I nat what, & songes wolde he make
Iusten, and don of armes many thynges
Sende her letters, tokens, broches, & rynges
Now herkeneth how he shal his lady serue
There as he was in peryll for to sterue
For hunger and for mischefe in the see
And desolate, and fled fro his countree
And al his folke with tempest al to driuen
She hath her body and eke her realme yeuen
In to his honde, there she might haue bene
Of other lande than of Cartage a quene
And lyued in ioy ynough, what wold ye more
This Eneas, that hath thus depe yslore
Is wery of his crafte within a throwe
The hote ernest is al ouer blowe
And priuely he doth his shyppes dight
And shapeth him to stele away by nyght
This Dido hath suspection of this
And thought wel that it was al amys
For in his bed he lythe a nyght and syketh
She asketh him anon, what him mislyketh
Ey dere herte, whiche that I loue most
Certes qō he this nyght my fathers goste
Hath in my slepe, me so sore tormented
And eke Mercury his message hath presented
That nedes to the conquest of Italye
By destyne is sone for to sayle
For which me thinketh, brosten is myne herte
Therwith his false teres out they sterte
And taketh her with in his armes two
Is that in ernest qō she wol ye so
Haue ye nat swore, to wyfe me to take
Alas, what woman wol ye of me make
I am a gentyl woman and a quene
Ye wol not fro your wyfe thus foule flene
That I was borne alas, what shal I doe
To reuen in sorre, this noble quene Dido
She seketh halowes, and doth sacrifice
She kneleth, crieth, that routhe is to deuise
Conforteth him, and proffereth him to be
His thral, his seruaunt, in the best degree
She falleth him to fote, and sowneth there
Discheuele with her bright gylte heere
And saith, haue mercy, let me with you ryde
These lordes, which y wonnen me beside
Wol me distroyen onely for your sake
And ye wol me nowe to wyfe take
As ye haue sworne, thy wol I yeue you leue
To sleen me with your swerde, now sone at eue
For than yet shal I dyen as your wyfe
I am with childe, & yeue my childe his lyfe
Pitey lorde, haue pyte in your thought
But al this thyng auayleth her right nought
And as a traytour fro the gan to sayle
Towarde the large countre of Italye
And thus hath he left Dido in wo & pyne
And wedded there a lady bright Lauyne

I clothe be lafte, and eke his swoꝛde stōdinge
Whan he fro Dido stale in her slepynge
Right at her beddes heed, so gan he hye
Whan that he stale away to hys naye
Which clothe, whan sely Dido gan awake
She hath it kyste ful ofte for hys sake
And sayd, o swete cloth, while Jupiter it lest
Take my soule, bebynde me of this beest
I haue fulfylled of fortune al the course
And thus alas, withouten his socourse
Twenty tyme yswouned hath she thanne
And whan that she vnto her suster Anne
Complayned had, of which I may nat write
So great routh I haue it for to endyte
And bad her norice and her suster gon
To fetchen fyre, and other thynges anon
And sayde that she wolde sacry fye
And whan she might her tyme wel aspye
Upon the fyre of sacrifice she stette
And with his swoꝛde she rofe her to the hert
But as myn auctour sayth, yet thus she seyd
Or she was hurte, before or she deyde
She wrote a letter anon, and thus began
Right so gan she as the whyte swan
Ayenst his dethe begynneth for to synge
Right so to you I make my complayninge
Nat that I trowe to getten you agayne
For wel I wote it is al in vayne
Sens that the goddes ben cōtrarious to me
But syn my name is lost through you (qd she)
I may wel lese a woꝛde on you or letter
Albeit, I shal be neuer the better
For thilke wynde that blowe your ship away
The same winde hath blowe away your fay
But who so wol al this letter haue in mynde
Rede Ouide, and in him he shal it fynde.

Here endeth the legende of Dido quene of Cartage: and here folweth the legende of hypsiphile and Medea.

You rote of false louers, duke Jason
Thou sterf, deuourer, & confusyon
Of gentyl women, gentyl creatures
Thou madest thy reclayming and thy lures
To ladyes of thy feathly cheꝛ apeꝛaunce
And of thy woꝛdes fained with pleasaunce
And of thy fayned trouth, and thy manere
With thyn obeysaunce and humble cheꝛe
And with thyn contrefeyted payne and wo
There other false one, thou falsedst two
O ofte swoꝛe thou, that thou woldest dye
For loue, whan thou ne felte maladye
Saue foule delyte, whiche thou callest loue
If that I lyue, thy name shal be shoue
In englysshe, that thy deceyte shal be knowe
Haue at ꝑ Jasō, nowe thyn honour is blowe
But certes, it is both routh and wo
That Loue with false louers werketh so
For they shal haue wel better loue and cheꝛe
Than he that hath bought loue ful deꝛe
Or had in armes many a blody boꝛe
For euer as tender a capon carueth the foꝛe
Though he be false, & hath ꝑ foule betrayed
As shal the goodman that therfore payde
Although he haue to the capon skyl & ryght
The false foxe wol haue his parte at nyght
On Jason this ensample is wel sene
By hipsiphile, and Medea the quene
In Thessalye, as Ouyde telleth vs
There was a knyght, that hight Pelleus
That had a brother, whiche that hight Eson
And whan for age he might vnnethes gon
He yaue to Pelleus the gouernyng
Of al his reigne, and made him lorde & king
Of whiche Eson, this Jason getten was
That in his tyme, in al that lande there nas
Nat suche a famous knyght of gentrylesse
Of fredom, of strength, and of lustynesse
After his fathers deth he bare him so
That there nas none that lyst ben his foe
But did him al honour and companye
Of whiche this Pelleus hath great enuye
Imagynyng, that Jason might be
Enhaunsed so, and put in suche degre
With loue of lordes of his regyoun
That from his reigne, he maye be put adoun
And in his wyt a nyght compassed he
Howe Jason might best distroyed be
Withouten sclaunder of his compassment
And at the last he toke auysement
That to sende him into some ferre countre
There as this Jason may distroyed be
This was his wyt, al made he to Jason
Great cheꝛe of loke, and of affection
For drede lest his lordes it espyde
So fyl it, as fame renneth wyde
There was such tydyng ouer al, & such loos
That in an Yle, that called was Colcos
Beyonde Troye eastwarde in the see
That there was a ram, that men might se

The

That had a flees of golde, that shone so brizt
That no where was there such another sight
But it was kept alway with a dragoun
And many other maruayles vp and doun
And with two bulles, maked al of bras
That spytten fyre, & muche thing there was
But this was eke the tale natheless
That who so wolde wynnen thilke flees
He muste bothe, or he it winnen myght
With the bulles and the dragon fyght
And kyng Otes, lorde was of that yle
This Pelleus bethought vpon this wyle
That he his neuewe Jason wolde ernste
To saylen to that londe, hym to dispryse
And sayd, neuewe if it myght be
That suche worshyp myght fall the
That thou thys famous tresore myght wyn
And bryngen it my regyon within
It were to me great pleasaunce & honour
Than were I holde to quite thy labour
And al thy costes I wol my selfe make
And chose what folke thou wolt with ȳ take
Lat se nowe, darste thou taken this voyage
Jason was yonge, and lusty of corage
And vnderstoke to don this like empryse
Anon Argus his shyppes gan deuyse
With Jason went the stronge Hercules
And many another, that he with hym ches
But who so asketh, who is with hym gon
Let him rede Argonauticon
For he wol tel a tale longe ynough
Philoctetes anon the sayle vp drough
Whan the wynde was good, & gan him hye
Out of hys countre, called Thessalye
So longe they sayled in the salte see
Til in the yle of Lemnon aryued he
Al be thys nat reherced of Ouyde
Yet sayth Ouyde in his epystles so
And of this yle lady was and quene
The fayre yonge Hypsiphile the shene
That whilom Thoas doughter was ȳ king
Hipsiphile was gon in her playeng
And romyng on the cleuis by the see
Vnder a banke anone espyed she
Where lay the shyppe, that Jason gan arme
Of her goodnesse adowne she lenderth blyue
To weten, if that any straunge wyght
With tempest thyder were yblowe anyght
To done hym socour, as was her vsaunce
To furtheren euery wyght, & don pleasaunce
Of bery bountye, and of curtesye
This messanger adowne hym gan to hye
And founde Jason and Hercules also
That in a cogge to londe were ygo
Hem to refreshen, and to take the ayre
The morwyng attempre was and fayre
And in her way this messanger hem mette
Ful comyngly these lordes two he grette
And dyd hys message, askyng hem anon
If that they were broken, or ought wo begon
Or had nede of lodesmen, or vitayle
For succour they shulde nothyng fayle
For it was vtterly the quenes wyl
Jason answerde mekely and styl
Dy lady, qd he thanke I herely
Of her goodnesse, vs nedeth trewely
Nothyng as nowe, but that we were be
And come for to play out of the see
Tyl that the wynde be better in our way
This lady cometh by the clyffe to play
With her meyne, endlonge the stronde
And fyndeth this Jason, & this other fonde
Inspekynge of this thyng, as I you tolde
This Hercules and Jason gan beholde
How that ȳ quene it was, & fayre her grette
Anon right as they vouth this lady mette
And she toke hede, & knewe by her maniere
By her aray, by wordes, and by chere
That it were gentyl men of great degre
And to the castel with her ledeth she
These straunge folke, & doth hē great honour
And asketh hem of trauayle and of labour
That they haue suffred in the salte see
So that within a day, two or thre
She knewe by the folke ȳ in his shyppes be
That it was Jason ful of renomee
And Hercules, that had the great labs
That soughten the auentures of Colcos
And dyd hem honour, more than before
And with hem dealed euer longer the more
For they ben worthy folke withouten les
And namely moste she spake with Hercules
To hym her herte bare, he shulde be
Sadde, wise, and trewe, of wordes auysse
Withouten any other affeccion
Of loue, or any other ymagynacion
This Hercules hath this Jason prayed
That to the counte he hath it vp reysed
That halte so tre we a man there nas of loue
Vnder the cope of heuen, that is aboue
And he was wise, hardy, secrete, and riche
Of these thre poutes, ther nas non yliche
Of fredom passed he, and lusty bede
Al tho that lyuen, or ben dede
Therto so great a gentyl man was he
And of Thessalye lykely kyng to be

There nas no lacke, but that he was agaste
To loue, and for to speke shamefaste
Him had leauer hym selfe to murdre and dye
Than that men shulde a louer hym espye
Is wolde god that I had ryene
My bloode and flesshe, so that I might lyue
With the nones, ỳ he had aught wher a wife
For his estate, for suche a lusty life
She shulden lede, with this lusty knyght
And al this was compassed on the nyght
Betwixe hym Jason, and this Hercules
Of these two here was a shrewde lees
To come to house, vpon an innocent
For to be dede this quene was her entent
And Jason is as coye as is a mayde
He loketh prouesly, but naught he sayde
But freely yaue he to her counsayleres
Yeftes great, and to her officeres
Is wolde god that I leaser had and tyme
By processe, al hys wronge for to tyme
But in this house, if any false louer be
Right as hym selfe now dothe, rist so dyd he
With sayning, and with euery subtel dede
Ye get no more of me, but ye wol rede
Thorugh al, that telleth al the caas
The soth is thys, that Jason wedded was
Vnto this quene, and toke of her substaunce
Al that so hym lyst, vnto hys purueyaunce
And vpon her begate children two
And drough his sayle, and saw her neuer mo
A letter sent she him certayne
Which were to longe to writen and to sayne
And hym reproueth of hys great vntrouth
And prayeth hym on her to haue some routh
And on hys children two, she sayde him this
That they be lyke of al thyng ywis
To Jason, saue they couthe nat begyle
And prayed god, or it were longe whyle
That she that had hys hert yreft her fro
Vnto fynden hym vntrue also
And that she must bothe her children spyl
And al tho that suffreth hym hys wyl
And trewe to Jason was she al her lyfe
And euer kepte her chaste, as for his wyfe
Ne neuer had she loue at her herte
But dyed for his loue of sorowes smerte
To Colcos come is thys duke Jason
That is of loue deuourer and dragon
As Mayde appeteth forme alwaye
And from forme to forme it passen may
Or as a welle that were botomles
Right so can Jason haue no pees
For to deliuren through his appetyte
To done with gentyl women his delyte
Thys is his lust, and his fruicte
Jason is roomed forth to the cyte
That whylom cleped was Jasonycos
That was the mayster to one of al Colcos
And hath yholde the cause of his coming
Vnto Otes, of that countrey kyng
Prayeng hym that he must done his assay
To gette the fleese of golde, if that he may
Of whiche the kynge assenteth to hys bone
And dothe him honour, as it is to done
So forforthe, that his doughter, hys heyre
Medea, which that was so wise and fayre
That fayrer saugh there neuer man with eye
He made her done to Jason companye
At meate, and syte by hym in the hal
Nowe was Jason a semely man withal
And lyke a lorde, and had a great renoun
And of his loke as royal as a lyoun
And godly of his speche, and familiere
And coude of loue al the craftes arte plener
Withouten booke, with euereych obseruaunce
And as fortune her ought a foule mischaunce
She wore enamored vpon thys man
Jason qõ she for ought I se or can
As of thys thyng, the whiche ye ben aboute
Ye and your selfe ye putte in muche doute
For who so wol this auenture atchieue
He may nat wele asterten, as I leue
Withouten dethe, but I hys helpe be
But natheles it is my wyl qõ she
To forthren you, so that ye shall nat dye
But turnen sounde home to your Thessalye
By right Lady qõ thys Jason tho
That ye haue of my dethe or my wo
Any regarde, and done me thys honour
I wot wel that my myght, ne my labour
May nat deserue it in my lyues day
God thanke you, there I ne can ne may
Your man am I, and lowely you beseche
To bren my helpe, withouten more speche
But certes for my dethe shal I not spare
Tho gan this Medea to hym declare
The peryl of this case, fro poynt to poynt
Of his batayle, and in what disioynt
He mote stonde, of whiche no creature
Saue only she, ne myght his lyfe assure
And shortly, right to the poynt for to go
They ben accorded fully betwyxe hem two
That Jason shal her wedde, as true knyght
And terme yset to come soone at nyght
Vnto her chambre, and make there his othe
Vpon the goddes, that he for lese or lothe

Be

He shulde her neuer fallen wyght ne day
To ben her husbonde whyle he lyue may
Is she that from his deth hym saued here
And her vpon at nyght they mette yfere
And doth his othe, & gothe with her to bedde
And on the morowe vpwarde he him spedde
For she hath taught hi how he shal nat fayle
The flees to wynne, & slynten hys batayle
And saued hym hys lyfe, and hys honour
And gate hym a name, as a conquerour
Right through the sleight of her enchantmēt
Nowe hath Jason the fleese, & home is went
With Medea, a treasours ful great wonne
But vnwyste of her father she is gonne
To Thessalye, with duke Jason her lefe
That afterwarde hath brouzt her to mischefe
For as a traytour he is from her go
And with her lefte yonge children two
And falsely hath betrayed her, alas
And euer in loue a chefe traytour he was
And wedded yet the thirde wyfe anon
That was the doughter of kyng Creon
This is the meede of louyng and guerdon
That Medea receyued of duke Jason
Right for her trouth, and for her kyndnesse
That loued him better than her selfe I gesse
And lefte her father, and her herytage
And of Jason thys is the vassalage
That in his dayes nas neuer non yfounde
So false a louer, goyng on the grounde
And therfore in her letter thus she sayd
Firſt when she of hys falsnesse him vmbrayd
Thy lyked me thy yelowe heer to se
More than the boundes of myn honestee
Thy lyked me thy youth and thy fayrnesse
And of thy tonge, the infynyte gracyousnesse
O haddest thou in thy conquest deed ybe
Ful mikel vntrouth had there dyed with the
Wel can Ouyde her letter in verse endyte
Whiche were as nowe to longe for to wzite.

Chere endeth the legende of Hypsyphile and Medea: And here folowyth the legende of Lucrece of Rome.

Owe more I fain therklyng of kynges
Of Rome, for her horrible doynges
Of the laste kynge Tarquinius
As sayth Ouid and Titus Liuius
But for that cause tel I nat this storie
But for to prayse, and drawen in memorie
The very wyfe, the very Lucresse
That for her wyfehode, and her stedfastnesse
Nat onely that these panyms her cōmende
But that cleped is in our legende
The great Austyn, that hath compassioun
Of thys Lucrece that starfe in Rome toun
And in what wise, I wol but shortly treat
And of this thing I touch but the great
When Ardea besiege was aboute
With Romayns, that ful sterne were & stoute
Ful longe lay the siege and lyter wroughten
So ỳ they wer halfe ydel, as hem thoughten
And in his play Tarquinius the yonge
Gan for to tape, for he was lyght of tonge
And sayd, that it was an ydle lyfe
No man dyd there more than hys wyfe
And let vs speke of wyues, that is best
Prayse euery man hys owne as him lest
And with out speche let vs ryde out here
A knight that hyght Colatyn vp here
And sayd thus, nay sir it is no nede
To trowen on the worde, but on the dede
I haue a wyfe, god be that as I trowe
Is holden good of al that euer her knowe
So we to Rome ronyght, and we shul se
Tarquinius answerde, that lyketh me
To Rome they be comen, and fast hem dight
To Colatyns house, and downe they lyght
Tarquinius, and eke hys Colatyne
The husbonde knewe the erres wel a tyme
And ful priuely in to the house they gone
Nor at the gate, porter was there none
And at the chambre doore they abyde
Thys noble wyfe sate by her beddes syde
Discheueled, for no malyce she ne thought
And soft wol sayth Liu that she wrought
To kepen her from slouthe and ydelnesse
And bad her seruauntes done her besynesse
And asketh hem, what tydynges heren ve
How sayth men of the siege, howe shal it be
God wolde the walles were fallen a downe
Myn husbonde is to longe out of this towne
For whiche drede doth me sore to smerte

Right

Right as a swordе, it stynged to myn hert
Whan I thynke on thys or of that place
God saue my lordе, I pray him for his grace
And therwithal so rendrely she gan wepe
And of her werke she toke no more kepe
But meekely she let her eyen fal
And thylke semblant sate her wel withal
And eke her teares ful of benygnesse
Embelesed her wyfely chastenesse
Her countenaunce is to herte digne
For they accorded en in dede and signe
And with that worde her husbonde Colatin
Or she of him was ware, came sterlyng in
And sayd, drede the nat for I am here
And she anone up rose, with blisful chere
And kyssed hym, as of wyues is the wonne
Tarquinius this proude kynges sonne
Conceyued hath her beautie and her chere
Her yelowe herte, her bounte, & her manere
Her bewe, her wordes, ỳ she hath cõplayned
And by no craft her beautie was nat fayned
And caught to this lady suche desyre
That in his hert he brent as any fyre
So wodely, that his witte was al forgoten
For wel thought he she shulde nat be goten
And ate the more he was in dispayre
The more coueyteth, and thought her fayre
His blynde lust was al his coueityng
On morowe, whan the birde began to syng
Vnto the siege he cometh ful pruely
And by hym selfe he walketh soberly
The ymage of her receyuyng al waye newe
Thus lay her hert, & thus fresh was her hew
This sate, this spak, this was her chere
Thus fayre she was, & this was her maniere
Al this conceyte his herte hath fro me take
And as the see, with tempest al to shake
That after whan the storme is al ago
Yet wol the water quappe a day or two
Right so, though that her forme were absent
The pleasaunce of her forme was present
But nathelesse nat pleasaunce, but delyte
Or an vnright ful talent with dispyte
For maugre her, she shal my semblaunt be
Nap helpeth nat by man alwaye (q̃ he)
What ende that I make, it shal be so
And gyrte him with his swordе, & gan to go
And he forthe right vnto Rome he come
And al alone his way that he hath nome
Vnto the house of Colatyn ful tyght
Down was ỳ sõne, & day hath lost his lyght
And in he come, vnto a priuy halke
And in the night ful thefely gan he stalke
Whan euery wight was to his rest brought
Ne no wight had of treson suche a thought
Whether by windowe, or by other gru
With swerde ydrawe, shortly he cometh in
There as she lay, this noble wyfe Lucresse
And as she woke, her brode she felt presse
What dest is that (q̃ she) that wayeth thus
I am the kynges sonne Tarquinius
(Q̃ he) but & thou crie, or any noyse make
Or if thou any creature awake
By thylke god, that formed man of lyme
This swerde through thyn hert shal fyre
And therwithal, vnto her throte he sterte
And set the swerde al sharpe on her herte
No word she spake, she hath no might therto
What shal she sayne, her witte is al ago
Right as a wolfe that fameth a lambe alone
To whom shal she cõplayne or make mone
What, shal she fight with an hardy knyght
Or worse men a woman hath no myght
What, shal she crye, or howe, shal she adrede
That hath her by the throte ỳ swerd at hede
She asketh grace, and sayd al that she can
No wolt thou nat (q̃ this cruel man,
As wisely Jupiter my sonle saue
I shal in thy stable slee thy knaue
And lay hym in thy bedde and loude crye
That I the fynde in suche auoutrye
And thus thou shalt be dede and also lest
Thy name, for thou shalt nat chese
This Romayns wiues loueden so her name
In thylke tyme, and dreden so the blame
That what for fere of slaũder, & dred of deth
She loste bothat ones wit and breth
And in a swough she lay, & wote so dede
Men might ren vnto her at me or dede
She feleth nothyng, neither soule ne fayre
Tarquinius, that arte a kynges heyre
And shuldest as by lynage and by ryght
Done as a lordе, and a very knyght
Why hast thou don dispite to cytezeyne
Why hast thou done thy lady vylanye
Alas, of the this was a vilayneus dede
But now vnto the purpose, in the story I rede
Whan he was gone, & this mischaunce is fal
This lady sent after her frendes al
Father, mother, & husbonde, al yfere
And discouered with her herte clere
In habyt suche as women vsed tho
Vnto the burying of her frendes go
She sate in hal, with a sorowful syght
Her frendes aske what her ayleth myght
And who was dede, & she sate aye wepyng

A worde

I worde for shame ne may she forthout brig
Ne vpon hem she durst nat beholde
But at the laste of Tarquiny she hem tolde
This ruful case, and al this thyng horrible
The wo to tel, were impossible
That she and al her frendes make at ones
It had folkes hertes ben of stones
It might haue maked hem vpon her rewe
Her hert was so wyfely and so trewe
She sayd, that for her gylte ne for her blame
Her husbonde shulde nat haue the foule name
That wolde she nat suffren by no waye
And they answerde al vnto her saye
That they forgaue it her, for it was right
It was no gylte, it lay nat in her myght
And sayden her ensamples many one
But al for naught, for thus she sayd anone
Be as be may go we of forgyuing
I wyl nat haue no forgyfte for nothyng
But prively she caught forth a knyfe
And therwithal she rafte her selfe her lyfe
And as she fel a downe she caste her loke
And of her clothes, yet hede she toke
For in her falling, yet she had a care
Leste that her fete, or suche thynges sayr bare
So wel she loued clennesse, and eke trouthe
Of her had al the towne of Rome routhe
And Brutus hath by her chaste blode sworne
That Tarquin shulde vbanished be therfore
And al his kynne, and let the people cal
And openly the tale he tolde hem al
And openly let carry her on a bere
Throughal the towne that men may se a here
The horrible dede of her oppressioun
Ne ruct was there kyng in Rome toun
Fers thylke day, and he was holden there
A tyrant, and euer her day yhalowed dere
Is in her lawe: and thus endeth Lucrece
The noble wyfe, Ouyus beareth witnesse
Rede it for she was of loue so trewe
Ne in her wyl she chaunged for no newe
And in her stable herte, sadde and kynde
That wtheste women men may alday fynde
Here as they call her hert, here it dwelleth
For wel I wote, that Crist him selfe telleth
That in Israel, as wyde as is the londe
That so great faith in al the londe he nat fonde
As in a woman, and this is no lye
And as for men, loke ye suche tyrannye
They done al day, assay hem who so lyke
The treweste is ful brothel for to tryste.

Here endeth the legende of Lucrece of Rome, & here foloweth the legende of Ariadne of Athenes.

Lige infernal Minos,
of Crete kyng
Louer cometh thy for, I
comen on the tyng
Nat for thy sake oneli
wiuen is this Ioye
But for to shape ayen
vnto memoire
Of Theseus the great vnrouthe of loue
For whiche the goddes of heuen aboue
Ben wroth, & wrath haue take for his trespace
Be teed for shame, nowe I thy lyfe begynne
Minos that was the mighty kyng of Crete
That had an hundred cytes strong & grete
To stole hath sent his sonne Androgeus
To Athenes, of the whiche it happed thus
That he was slayne, hauing pitously pyte
Right in that cyte, nat but for enuye
The great Minos, of the whiche I spoke
His sonnes death is come for to wreke
Alcathoe he besieged harde and longe
But natheles the walles be so stronge
And Nisus, that was kyng of that cyte
So chyualrous, that it el dredeth he
Of Minos or his hoste, rose he no rate
Til on a day befel an auenture
That Nisus doughter stode vpon the wal
And of the syege saw the maner al
So lapped it, that at scarmysshyng
She caste her yen vpon Minos the kyng
For his beaute, and his chyualrye.
So sore, that she wende for to dye
And shortly of this processe for to pace
She made Minos wynnen thylke place
So that the cyte was al at his wyl
To sauen whom he wolde, or elles spyl
But vnkendely he quytte her kyndenesse
And let her drenche in sorowe and distresse
Here that the goddes had of her pyte
But that tale were to longe as nowe for me
Athenes wan this kyng Minos also
As Alcathoe, and other townes mo
And this he ordred, that Minos hath yeuen
Hem of Athenes, that they more nin yeuen
Fro yere to yere, her owne children dere
For to be slayne, as ye shal after here
This Minos hath a monster, a wicked beest
That was so cruel, that without areest
Whyl a man was brought in to his presence
He

He wolde him eate, there helpeth no defence
And euery thirde yere, withouten doute
They casten lotte, as it came aboute
On ryche and poore, he muste his sonne take
And of his childe he must presence make
To Minos, to saue hym or to spyll
Or let his beest deuour him at his wyll
And this hath Minos don right in dispyte.
To wreke his sonne was set al his delyte
And make hem of Athenes hys thral
Fro yere to yere, whyle he lyuen shal
And whom he sayleth wha this toug is won
This wicked custome is so longe yron
Tyl of Athenes kyng Egeus
Wote fenden his owne sonne Theseus
Sens that the lotte is fallen hym vpon
To ben deuoured, for grace is there non
And forth is ladde this wofull ponge knight
Vnto y countre of king Minos ful of might
And in a prison ferred faste is he
Tyl the tyme he shulde yfreten be
Wel mayst thou wepe, o woful Theseus
That art a kynges sonne, and damned thus
Me thinketh thys, that thou art depe vholde
To whom that saued the fro cares colde
And nowe yf any woman helpe the
Wel oughtest thou her seruaunt for to be
And ben her trewe louer yere by yere
But nowe to come ayen to my matere
The toure, there this Theseus is throwe
Downe in the bottom derke, & wonder lowe
Was stonding to the wal of a foreyne
Longyng vnto the doughteren tweyne
Of Minos, that in her chambres grete
Dwelten aboue the mayster strete
Of the towne, in toy and in solas
Not I nat howe, it happed per caas
As Theseus complayned him by nyght
The kynges doughter, that Ariadne hight
And eke her suster Phedra, herden al
His complaynte, as they stode on the wal
And loked vpon the bright moone
Hem lyste nat to go to bedde so soone
And of his wo they had compassyon
A kynges sonne to be in suche prison
And ben deuoured, thought hem great pyte
Than Ariadne spake to her suster fre
And sayd: Phedra leue suster dere
This woful lordes sonne may ye nat here
Howe pitously he complayneth his kynne
And eke his poore estate that he is inne
And gyltelesse, certes nowe it is routhe
And yf ye wol assent by my trouthe
He shal ben holpen howe so that we do
Phedra answerde, ywis me is as wo
For him, as euer I was for any man
And to his helpe the best rede I can
Is, that we done the gayler priuely
To come and speke with vs hastely
And done this woful man with him to come
For if he may this monster ouercome
Than were he quite, there is none other bote
Let vs wel taste hym at his herte roote
That if so be, that he a weapon haue
Where that he his lyfe dare kepe or saue
Fighten with this fende, and him defende
For in the prison, there as he shal dyscende
Ye wote wel, that the beest is in a place
That is nat derke, & hath rome & eke space
To welde an axe, or swerde, staffe, or knif
So that me thynketh he shulde saue his lif
If that he be a man, he shal do so
And we shal make hym balles eke also
Of wexe and towe, that whan he gapeth fast
Into the beestes throte he shal hem cast
To sleke his honger, and encomber his teth
And right anon, whan that Theseus seeth
The beest acheked, he shal on hym leepe
To sleen hym, or they comen more to keepe
This weapen shal the gayler, or that tyde
Ful priuely within the prison hyde
And for the house is crouded to and fro
And hath so queynt waves for to go
For it is shapen as the mase is wrought
Therto haue I a remedy in my thought
That by a clewe of rewyne, as he hath gon
The same way he may returne anon
Folowing alway the threde, as he hath come
And whan this beest is ouercome
Than may he flyen away out of this stede
And eke the gayler may he with hym lede
And hym auaunce at home in his contree
Sens that so great a lordes sonne is he
This is my rede, if that ye dare it take
What shulde I longer sermon of it make
The gayler cometh, and with him Theseus
Whan these thynges ben accorded thus
Downe sate Theseus vpon his knee
The right lady of my lyfe (qd he)
I soro wful man, vdampned to the dethe
Fro you, whyles that me lasteth breethe
I wol nat trayne, after this auenture
But in your seruyce, thus I wol endure
That as a wretch vnknow, I wol you serue
For euermore, tyl that myn herte sterue
Forsake I wol at home myn heritage

n as I sayd, ben of youre courte a page
hat ye vouchesafe that in this place
graunte me to haue suche a grace
at I may haue, nat but my meate a drinke
o for my sustynaunce yet wol I swynke
ght as you lyst, that Mynos ne no wight
ms that he saw me neuer with eyen syght
no man els shal me espye
o lyue, and so wel I shal me gye
o me so wel disfygure, and so lowe (we
hat in this world there shal no man me kno
e haue my lyfe, and to haue presence
you, that done to me this excellence
d to my father shal I sende here
is worthy man, that is your gayler
d him so guerdon, that he shall well be
e of the greatest men of my countre
dit I durst sayne, my lady bright
am a kynges sonne, and eke a knyght
I wolde god, if that it myght be
e weren in my countrey all thre
d I with you, to beare you companye
han shuld ye sene if that I therof lye
d if that I profer you in lowe manere
to ben your page, and seruen you right here
ut I you serue as lowly in that place
pray to Mars to yeue me suche grace
hat shames deth on me there more fall
d deth and pouerte to my frendes all
d that my spryte by nyght more go
ter my deth, and walke to and fro
hat I more of traytour haue a name
r which my spirit more go, to do me shame
d if I clayme euer other degre
t ye vouchsafe to yeue it me
I I haue sayd, of shames deth I dey
d mercy lady, I can naught els sey
I semely knyght was thys Theseus to se
d ponge, but of twenty yere and thre
ut who so had vsene his countenaunce
wold haue wept, for routh of his penaunce
r which this Ariadne in this maners
swerde to his profre and to his chere
kynges sonne, and eke a knyght (qd she)
o ben my seruaunt in so lowe degree
d childe it, for the shame of women al
d lowe me neuer suche a cate befal
d sende you grace, and sleight of herte also
on to defende, and knyghtly to fleen your foe
d sene here after I may you fynde
o me, and to my sustere here to kynde
hat I ne repent nat to yeue you lyfe
et were it bette I were your wyfe
Sithe ye ben as gentyl borne as I
And haue a realme nat but faste by
Than þ I suffred your gentylesse to serue
Or that I let you as a page serue
It is no profyte, as vnto your kynrede
But what is that, þ má wol nat do for drede
And to my sustere syth that it is so
That she more gone with me, if þ I go
Or els suffre deth as wel as I
That ye vnto your sonne as trewly
Done her be wedded at youre home comyng
Thus is the fynal ende of all this thyng
Ye swere it here, vpon all þ may be sworne
Ye lady myn (qd she) or els to morne
Wete I be, wt the Mynotaure or to morowe
And haueth here of myn hert blod to borowe
If that ye wol, if I had knyfe or spere
I wolde it letten out, and theron swere
For than at erste, I wot ye wolde me leue
By Mars, that is chefe of my beleue
So that I myght lyuen, and nat fayle
Go morow for to taken my batayle
I nolde neuer fro this place flye
Yet that ye shulde the bery profe se
For now if that the soth I shal you say
I haue loued you ful many a day
Though ye ne wist nat in my countre
And aldermoste desyred you to se
Of any erthly lyuyng creature
Vpon my trouthe I sweare, and you assure
This seuen yere I haue your seruaunt be
Nowe haue I you, and also haue ye me
My dere hert, of Athenes duchesse
This lady sayleth at this stedfastnesse
And at his herely wordes, and at his chere
And to her sustere sayd in this maniere
And sothely sustere myn (qd she)
Nowe be we duchesses both I and ye
And herde to the regals of Athenes
And bothe hereafter lyuely to be quenes
And saued fro his deth a kynges sonne
As euer of gentyl women is the wonne
To saue a gentyl man, enforth her myght
In honest cause, and namely in his right
We thinketh no wight ought vs herof blame
Ye beaten vs therfore an euel name
And shortly of this mater for to make
This Theseus of her hath leaue take
And euery poynt was performed in dede
As ye haue in this couenaunt herde me rede
His wepen, his clewe, his thig þ I haue sayd
Was by the gayler in the house playd
There as the Mynotaure hath his dwellyng

Right fast by the doze, at his entryng
And Theseus is lad vnto his dethe
And forth vnto this Mynotaure he gethe
And by the teachyng of this Adriane
He ouercame this beest, and was his bane
And out he cometh by the clewe agayne
Ful prively, whan he this beest hath slayne
And the gayler gotten hath a barge
And of his wiues treasure gan it charge
And toke his wyfe, and eke her fustet fre
And by the gayler, and with hem al thre
Is stole away out of the londe by nyght
And to the countre of Enupyr him dight
There as he had a frende of his knowyng
There ferften they, there daunsen they a syng
And in his armes hath this Adriane
That of the beest hath kepte him fro his bane
And get him there a noble barge anone
And of his countrey folke a ful great wone
And taketh his leaue, and homwarde sayleth he
And in an yle, amydde the wylde see
There as there dwelte creature none
Saue wylde beestes, and that ful many one
He made his shyppe a londe for to sette
And in that yle, halfe a day he lette
And sayd, þ on the londe he must him reste
His marryners haue done right as him leste
And for to tell shortly in this case
Whan Ariadne his wife a slepe was
For that her fustet fayrer was than she
He taketh her in his honde, and forth goth he
To shyppe, and as a traytour stale away
Whyle that this Ariadne a slepe lay
And to his countreywarde he sayleth blyue
Twenty dyuel way, the wynde him dryue
And founde his father drenched in the see
We lyste no more to speke of him parde
These false louers, poyson be her bane
But I wol turne agayne to Adriane
That is with slepe for werynesse ytake
Ful sorowfully her herte may awake
Alas, for the myne herte hath pite
Right in the dawnyng awaketh she
And groperth in the bed, and fonde right nought
Alas, qõ she that euer I was wrought
I am betrayed, and her herre to rente
And to the stronde barefote fast she wente
And cryed: Theseus myn herte swete
Where be ye, that I may nat vn you mete?
And might thus with beestes ben yslayne
The halowe rockes answerde her agayne
No man she sawe, and yet shone the moone
And hye vpon a rocke she went soone
And sawe his barge, saylyng in the see
Colde wexe her herte, and right thus sayd she
Weker than ye, fynde I the bestes wyse
Hath he nat synne, that he her thus begyle
She cryed, o turne agayne for routh and syn
Thy barge hath nat al his meyne inne
Her kerchefe on a pole stycked she
Ascaunce he shulde it wele yse
And him remembre that she was behynde
And turne agayne, and on the stronde her fyn
But al for naught, his way he is gone
And downe she fel a swowne on a stone
And vp she ryste, and kyssed in all her care
The steppes of his fete, there he hath fare
And to her bed right thus she speketh the
Thou bed qõ she, that hast receyued me
Thou shalt answere of two, and not of on
Where is the greater parte, away gone
Alas, wher shal I wretched wight become
For though so be that bote none here come
Home to my countrey dare I nat for drede
I can my selfe in this case nat rede
What shuld I tel more her complaynyng
It is so long, it were an heauy thyng
In her epystle, Naso telleth all
But shortly to the ende tel I shall
The goddes haue her holpen for pyte
And in the sygne of Taurus men may se
The stones of her crowne shyne clere
I wyl no more speke of this matere
But thus this false louer can begyle
His trew loue, the dyuel quyt him his wyle

There endeth the legende of Ariadne
And here folowyth the legende
of Phylomene.

THou feuer of the fo-
mes, þ hast wrought
The fayre wold, and bast
it in thy thought
Eternally, er thou thy
werke began
Why madest thou bere
the slaunder of man
Or al be that it was nat thy doyng
As for that fende, to make suche a thyng
Why suffredest thou that Tereus was borne
That is in loue so false and so forswore
That fro this world vp to the first heuen
Corrumpeth, what that folke his name neuen
And as to me, so grisly was his dede
That whan that I this foule storie rede

Myne eyen weren foule, and lore also
Yet lasteth the benyme of so longe ago
That enfecteth him, that wolde beholde
The story of Tereus, of which I tolde
Of Trace was he lorde, and kyn to Marte
The cruel god that stante with blody darte
And wedded had he with blysful chere
Kyng Pandyons fayre doughter dere
That hight Progne, flour of her countre
Though Juno lyste nat at the feest be
Ne Hymeneus, that god of wedding is
But at the feest redy ben ywis
The furys thre, with al her mortall brande
The oule al nyght aboute the balkes wonde
That prophete is of wo, and of mischaunce
This cruel, ful of longe and ful of daunce
Lasse a fourtenyght, or lytel lasse
But shortly of this story for to passe
(For I am wery of him for to tel)
Fro tyme that his wyfe and he togyther dwel
Tyl on a day she gan so sore longe
To sene her suster that she sawe not longe
That for desyre she myst what to say
But to her husbonde gan she for to pray
For goddes love, that she more ones gone
Her suster for to sen, and come aven anone
Or els but she mote to her wende
She praied him ỹ he wold after her sende
And this was day by day al her prayere
With al humblesse of wifehode, wold a there
This Tereus let make his shyppes yare
And into Grece him selfe is forth yfare
Unto his father in lawe gan he pray
To vouchesafe, that for a moneth or tway
That Philomene his wyues suster myght
On Progne his wife, but ones have a syght
And she shal come to you again anon
My selfe with her, I wyl both come & gon
And as my hertes lyfe I wyl her kepe
This olde Pandion, this kyng gan wepe
For tendernes of hert, for to leue
His doughter gon, and for to yeue her leue
Of al this worlde he loued nothyng so
But at the last leaue hath she to go
For Philomene with salte teres eke
Gan of her father grace to beseke
To sene her suster, that her longeth so
And him embraceth, with her armes two
And there also yonge and fayre was she
That whan that Tereus sawe her beaute
And of array, that there was none her lyche
And yet of beaute was she to so lyche
He caste his fyry herte vpon her so
That he wol have her, how so that it go
And with his wyles kneled, and so prayde
Tyl at the last Pandion thus sayde
Nowe sonne (quod he) ỹ art to me so dere
I the betake my yonge doughter dere
That beareth the key of al myne hertes lyfe
And grete wel my doughter, and thy wyfe
And yeue her leaue somtyme for to play
That she may sene me ones or I dey
And sothly he hath made him riche feest
And to his folke, the moste and eke the leest
That th him came, & vaste him yeftes grete
And him couereth through the maister strete
Of Athenes, and to the see him broughte
And tourneth home, no maner he ne thought
The ores pulleth forth the vessel fast
And in to Trace arryueth at the last
And vp in to a forest he her ledde
And to a caue priuely him spedde
And in this derke caue, it her lyste
Or lyst nought, he bad her for to reste
Of which her hert agroste, and sayd thus
Alhere is my suster, brother Tereus
And there withal she wepte tenderly
And quoke for feare pale and pitously
Right as the labe, ỹ of the wolfe is yfrom
Or as the culuer, ỹ of the Egle is ywroken
And is out of his clawes forth escaped
Yet it is a ferde, and a waped
Lest it be beare eftsones: so fare she
But vtterly it may none other be
By force hath this traytour done a dede
That he hath refte her of her maydenhede
Maugre her heed, by strength & by his myght
Lo here a dede of men, and that a right
She cryeth suster with ful loude steuen
And father dere helpe me god in heuen
Al helpeth nat, and yet this false theefe
Hath done this lady yet a more mischefe
For feare, lest she shulde his shame cryen
And done him openly a vyllany
And with his swerde her tonge of kerft he
And in a castel made her for to be
Ful priuely in prison euermore
And kepte her to his vsage and to his store
Wo ybe Philomene, wo is thyne hert
Huge ben thy sorowes, and wonder smert
God wreke the, and sende the thy bone
Nowe is tyme I make an ende soone
This Tereus is to his wyfe vcome
And in his armes hath his wife vnome
And priuely he wepte, & shoke his heed

And swore her, that he founde her suster deed
For which this sely Progne hath suche wo
That nygh her sorowful herte brake a two
And thus in teres let I Progne dwell
And of her suster forthe I wol you tel
This woful lady yerned had in youth
So that she worken and embrauden couth
And weauen in stole the rade uore
And it of women hath be wouen yore
And sothly for to sayne, she hath her fyll
Of mete and drinke, of clothyng at her wyll
And couthe eke rede well ynough and endyte
But with a penne she coulde not write
But letters can she weaue, to and fro
So that by the yere was al a go
She had wouen in a staines large
How she was brought fro Athenes in a barge
And in a cane how that she was brought
And al the thyng that Tereus wrought
She waue it wel, and wrote the story aboue
How she was serued for her susters loue
And to a man a tynge she yaue anon
And prayde him by sygnes for to gon
Unto the quene, and bearen her that clothe
And by signe swore many an othe
She shulde him yeue what she gette mynght
This man anon unto the quene him dyght
And toke it her, and al the maner tolde
And whan ꝑ Progne hath this thyng beholde
No worde she spake, for sorow & eke for rage
But sayned her to gon on pilgrymage
To Baccus temple, and in a lytel stounde
Her dombe suster syttyng hath she founde
Kepyng in the castel her selfe alone
Alas the wo, constraynte, and the mone
That Progne upon her dombe suster maketh
In armes eueryche of hem other taketh
And thus I let hem in her sorowe dwell
The remenaunt is no charge to tell
For this is al and some, thus was she serued
That neuer agylte, ne deserued
Unto this ere wel man, that she of wyste
Ye may beware of men if that you lyste
For al be that he wol nat for shame
Done as Tereus, to lese his name
Ne serue you as a murtherer or a knaue
Ful lytel while shul ye trewe him haue
That wol I sayn, al wer he now my brother
But it so be that he may haue a nother.

Here endeth the legende of Phylomene, & here folowyth the legende of Phillis.

By proue, as well as by auctorite
That wicked frute cometh of a wicked tre
That may ye fynde, yf it lyketh you
But for this ende, I speke this as now
To tel you of false Demophon
In loue a falser herde I neuer non
But it were his father Theseus
God for his grace fro suche one kepe vs
Thus these women prayen, that it here
Now to the effecte turne I of my matere
Distroyed is of Troye the eyte
This Demophon came sayling in the se
Towarde Athenes, to his paleys large
With him came many a shyp, & many a barge
Ful of folke, of which ful many one
Is wounded sore, and sycke, & wo be gone
And they haue at the siege longe ylaine
Behynde him came a wynde, and eke a rayne
That shoke so sore, his sayle might not stonde
Him were leuer than al the worlde a lande
So hunteth him the tempest to and fro
So derke it was, he coulde no where go
And with a waue brusten was his sterne
His shyp was rent so lowe, in such maneres
That carpenter coulde it nat amende
The see by nyght as any torche brende
For woode, & posseth him vp and down
Til Neptune hath of him compassioun
And Thetis Chorus, Tryton, & they all
And maden him vp a londe to fall
Where of that Phillis lady was and quene
Lycurgus doughter, fayrer vnto sene
Than is ꝑ flour agayne the bright sonne
Umeth is Demophon to londe ywonne
Weake & eke wery, and his folke forpyned
Of werynesse, and also enfamyned
And to the deth he was almost ydriuen
His wyse folke counsayle haue him yeuen
To seken helpe and socour of the quene
And loken what his grace might bene
And maken in that lande some cheuesaunce
And kepen him fro wo, and fro mischaunce
For sycke he was, and almost at the deth
Umeth might he speke, or drawe brethe
And lyeth in Rodopeya him for to reste
Whā he may walke, him thought it was beste
Unto the countre to seken for socour
Wen knewe him wele, & dyd him honour
For at Athenes duke and lorde was he

As Theseus his father hath ybe
That in his tyme was great of renoun
No man so great in al his regyoun
And lyke his father of face and of stature
And false of loue, it came him of nature
As doth the fore Renarde, the foxes sonne
Of kynde he couldc his olde fathers wonne
Without lore, as can a drake swymme
Whan it is caught, & caried to the brymme
This honorable quene Phillis doth hi chere
Her lyketh wel his sporte and his manere
But I am agroted here beforne
To write of hem ỳ in loue ben forsworne
And eke to haste me in my legende
Which to performe, god me grace sende
Therfore I passe shortly in this wyse
Ye haue wel herde of Theseus the gyse
And the betraying of fayre Adriane
That of her pyte kepte him fro his bane
And sworne wordes, right so Demophon
The same way, & the same path hath gon
That did his false fatuer Theseus
For unto Phillis hath he sworne thus
To wedden her, and her his trouth plyght
And pyked of her al the good he myght
Whan he was hole & sounde, & had his reste
And doth with Phillis, what so ỳ him leste
As wel I couldc, if that me lyste so
Tellen al his doyng to and fro
He sayde to his countrey mote him sayle
For there he wold her wedding apparayle
As fyl to her honour, and his also
And openly he toke his leaue tho
And to her shore he wolde not sojourne
But in a moneth again he wolde retourne
And in that londe let make his ordynaunce
As herr lorde, and toke the obeysaunce
Wel and hombly, and his shyppes dyght
And home he goth the nexte way he myght
For unto Phillis yet came he nought
And that hath she so harde and sore ybought
Alas, as the story doth us recorde
She was her owne deth with a corde
Whan that she saw ỳ Demophon her trayed
But first wrote she to him, & fall him prayed
He wolde come, and delyuer her of payne
As I rehearce shal a worde or twayne
He lyste not vouchsafe on him to swynke
Dispenden on him a penne ful of yuke
For false in loue was he, right as his fyre
The dyuel set her soules bothe on a fyre
But of the letter of Phillis wol I write
A worde or twayne, although it be but lyte

Thyne hostesse (qd she) O Demophon
Thy Phillis, which that is so wo begon
Of Rhodopeye, upon you more complayne
Ouer the terme set betwyx us twayne
That ye ne holden forwarde, as ye sayde
Your anere, which ye in our hauen layde
Hight us, that ye wolde comen out of doubt
Er that the moone ones were about
But tymes four, the moone hath hyd her face
Sens thilke day ye went fro this place
And four tymes lyght the world be again
But for al that, yet shal I sothly sayne
Yet hath the streme of Scython nat brought
Fro Athenes the shyp, yet came it nought
And if that ye the terme token wolde
As I or other trewe louers do sholde
I playne nat, god wot before my day
But al her letter writen I ne may
By order, for it were to me a charge
Her letter was right longe, and therto large
But here and there, in tyme I haue it layde
There as me thought that she hath wel sayde
She sayd, the sayles commeth nat again
Ne to the worde, there nys no fey certayne
But I wot why ye come nat, qd she
For I was of my loue to you so fre
And of the goddes that ye haue swore
That her vengeaunce fall on you therfore
Ye be nat suffisaunt to beare the payne
To meche trusted I, wel may I sayne
Upon your lymage, and your fayre tonge
And on your teres, sadly out wronge
Howe coude ye wepe so by crafte, qd she
May there suche teres fayned be
Howe certes, if ye wolde haue in memorye
It ought be to you but lytel glorye
To haue a fely mayde thus betrayde
To god qd she pray I, & ofte haue prayde
That it be nowe the greatest price of all
And most honour, ỳ euer you shal befall
And whan thyne olde auncetres payned be
In which men may her worthyne se
Than pray I god, thou payned be also
That folke may reden, forth by as they go
Lo this is he, that with his flattery
Betrayed hath, and done her villany
That was his trewe loue, in thought & dede
But sothly of o poynt yet may they rede
That ye ben lyke your father, as in this
For he begyled Ariadne ywis
With such an art, and such subtelte
As thou thy selues hast begyled me
As in that poynt, although it be nat fayre

Thou folowest certayne, and art his heyre
But sens thus sykfully ye me begyle
My body mote ye sene, within a while
Right in the hauen of Athenes fletyng
Withouten sepulture and buriens
Though ye ben harder than is any stone
And whan this letter was forth sent anone
And that she how brotel a thyng false he was
She for dispayre forthyd her selfe, alas
Suche sorowe hath she, for the beter her so
Beware ye women of your subtyl foe
Sens yet this day, men may ensample se
And trusteth no wight to loue no man but me.

Here endeth the legende of Phillis,
and here folowith the legende
of hypermistre.

Greece vbylom were ther
brethren two
Of whiche that one was
called Danao
That many a sonne hath
of his body vtterme
As suche false louers oft
come
among his sonnes al there was one
That Hypermestr he loued of euery chone
And whan this child was borne, this Danao
Gaue him a name, and called him Lyno
That other brother called was Egiste
That was of loue as false as euer man lyue
And many a doughter gate he in his lyfe
Of whiche he gate vpon his wyfe
A doughter here and bad her for to call
Hypermestra, progeny of hem all
The vertuous childe of her natiuite
To al good thewes bound was she
As lyked to the goddes or she was borne
That of the theft she shulde be the corne
The werdes that we clepen destyne
Hath shapen her, that she must nedes be
Vertous, sadde, wyse, true as stele
And to this woman it accordeth wele
For though Venus vaue her great beaute
With Jupiter compownded so was she
That constreyner, trouth, a birde of shame
And of her wifehode for to kepe her name
This thought her was felycite as here
And reed Mars, was that tyme of the yere
So feble, that his malyce is him rafte
Represshed hath Venus his cruel crafte
And what vp Venus, and other oppression
Of houses, Mars his venym is a don
That hypermestre dare nat handle a knyfe
In malyce, though she shulde lese her lyfe
But nathelesse, as heuen gan tho turne
Two bad aspectes, hath she of Saturne
That made her to dye in pryson
And I shal after make mencion
Of Danao and Egiltes also
And though so be that they were brethre two
For thilke tyme was spared no lynage
It lyked hem to maken mariage
Betwixt hypermestre, and him Lyno
And callen suche a day it shal be so
And ful accorded was it vtterly
The aray is wrought, the tyme is fast by
And thus Lyno hath of his fathers brother
The doughter wedded, eche of hem hath other
The torches brennen, the lampes bright
The sacrifyce ben ful redy dight
The sense out of the fyre reketh soote
The flour the leefe, is rent vp by the roote
To maken garlandes and crownes her
Fulfild the place of sounde of mynstralcye
Of songes amorous of maryage
As thilke tyme was the playn vsage
And this was in the paleys of Egiste
That this house was lord, right as him liste
And thus that day they dryuen to an ende
The feestes taken leue, and home they wende
The night is come, the bride shal gone bedde
Egiste to his chambre fast him spedde
And priuely let his doughter call
And whan the house bordes was of hem al
He loketh on his doughter with glad chere
And to her spake, as ye shal after here
Myn owne doughter, treasour of myn herte
Sens first I bar, I hapen was my herte
Ne by the fatal suffer had my bane
So now myne herte neuer thyng me come
As thou hypermestre, doughter dere
Take hede what thy father lay the here
And werke, after thy wyles euer mo
For al brethren doughter, I loue the so
That al the world to me nys halfe so leef
Ne nolde rede the for thy mischefe
For al the good vnder the colde moone
And what I mene it shal be sayd right soone
With protestacion, as I sayde thefe wyfe
That but thou do, as I shal the deuyfe
Thou shalt be dede, by him that al hath wrought
At thyne wordes thou me fraysest nought
Out of my paleys, or that thou be dede
But thou consent, and werke after my rede

Take

Take this to the fearful conclusyon
This hypermistre caste her eyen doun
And quoke as dothe the leefe of aske grene
Deed wexte her hewe, a like as ashen to sene
And sayd: lorde and father al your wyll
After my might, god wote I shal fulfyll
So it be to me no confusyon
I wyl (qõ he) haue none exception
And out he caught a knyfe, as rasour kene
Pyde this, qõ he, that it be nat sene
And whan thyn husbonde is to bedde go
Whyle that he slepeth, cut his throte a two
For in my dreme it is warned me
Howe that my neuewe shal my bane be
But whiche I not, wherfore I wol be syker
Sithen thou say nay, we two shall haue a byker
As I haue sayd, by hym that I haue sworne
This hypermistre hath nigh her wit forlorn
And for to passen harmelesse out of that place
She graunted him, ther was non other grace
And wythal a coffret taketh he tho
And sayd, herof a draught or two
Your him drynke, whan he goth to reste
As he shal slepe as longe as euer the leste
The narcotykes and opies ben so stronge
And go thy way, lest that him thinke to longe
Cometh the bride, a with ful sobre chere
As is of maydens ofte the maniere
To chambre brought, with ceuel & with slyge
And shortly, lest this tale be to longe
This Limo and she both brought to bedde
And euery wight out at the dore him spedde
The night is waxed, and he fel a slepe
Ful soundely begynneth he to wepe
She tyll her vp, and she defulle the quaketh
As doth the braunche, that zephirus shaketh
And he hee wexe al in dragone thal eyle
As colde as any frosse nowe wexeth the
For pyne by the herte drawe she so
And bede of herte bothe her so muche wo
That thilke down she fil, in swoche a were
She tilde her vp, & shaketh here and there
And on her handes faste loketh she
Alas, that myn handes bloody be
I am a mayde, and as by my nature
And by my semblaunt, and by my vesture
Myn hondes ben nat shapen for a knyfe
As for to reue no man fro his lyfe
What deuel haue I with the knyfe to doe
And that I haue my throte corne a two
Than shal I bleede alas, and be shende
And he des this thing more haue an ende
Or be or I more nedes lete our lyfe
Nowe certes (qõ she) sens I am his wyfe
And hath my fayth, yet is it bette for me
For to be deed, in wyfely honeste
Than be a traytour, lyuing in my shame
Be as be may, for ernest or for game
He shal awake, and erise and go his way
Out at this gutter, er that it be day
And wepte ful tenderly vpon his face
And in her armes gan him to embrace
And him she roggeth, and awaketh softe
And at the wyndowe lepe he fro the lofte
And whan she hath warned him, a don him bote
This Limo fulfre was, and light of fote
And from her ran, a ful good pas
This fely womanis so weake, alas
And helpeles, so that er the fyrst morwe
Her cruel father dyd her for to sorwe
Alas Limo, why arte thou so bestadde
Why ne hast thou remembred thilke sadde
And taken her, & bedde her tothe thy syde
For when she sawe that gone alwey was he
And that she might nat so fro him go
She folowen him, the fare dowue right tho
And vyl she was caught, and fetter in prison
This tale is sayd for this conclusion.

¶ Thus endeth the legendes of good women, and here folowyth a balade of Chaucer.

¶ A goodly balade of Chaucer.

MOther of mercy, doughter of your deere sone
Beholde my lyfe, my wo, and my penaunce
And fro thens take me, for my good entente
Your help I crye, haue on me some pytaunce
My lyfe, I knowe me fore
For to pourende
To your discretion I recommende
Myn herte and al, with euery remembraunce
All bodyly to be vnder your gouernaunce

Most dester I, and haue, and euer shal
Thing which might your hertes ease amende
Haue me excused, my power is out final
Marbrede is of right ye oughte to entende
My good wyl, which fayne would entende
To do you seruice, for al my suffysaunce
Is bodyly to be vnder your gouernaunce

Newe lyr in herte: whiche neuer shal apal
Aye freshe & newe, & right glad to dispende
Hy tyme in your seruyce, what so befal
Beseechyng your excellence to defende
Hy simpleneisse, yf ignoraunce offende
In any wyse, syth that myn affyaunce
Is holly to ben vnder your gouernaunce

Dayesy of lyght, herry grounde of comforte
The Sunnes doughter (ye wyght) as I rede
For whē he westreth, farwel your disporte
By your nature anone ryght for pure drede
Of ꝑ rude myght, ꝑ with his boystous wede
Of darkeneisse, shadoweth our emyspere
Then closen ye, my lyues lady dere

Dawnyng the day, to his kynde resorte
And Phebꝰ your father, wt his stremes rede
Adorneth the morowe, consumynge the sorte
Of misty cloudes, that wolden overlede
Tre we humble hertes, wyth her misty hede
Herre comfort a dayes, when even clere
Disclose and spredc my lyues lady dere

Ie vouldray: but great god disposeth
And maketh casuel by his prouydence
Suche thynge, as mans freele wit purposeth
Al for the best, yf that your conscience
Not grutche it, but in humble patience
It receyue, for god sayth without fable
A faythful hert euer is acceptable

Cautels, who so bleth gladlye gloseth
To eschewe suche it is right high prudence
What ye sayd ones, myn herte opposeth
That my wrytyng Japes in your absence
Pleased you muche better than my presence
Yet can I more, ye be not excusable
A faythful herte euer is acceptable

Quaketh my penne, my spirite supposeth
That in my writing ye finde woll som offēce
Myn hert weikneth thus sone, anon it riseth
Nowe hotte, nowe colde, and efte in feruence
That myse is, is caused of negligence
And not of malyce, therfore beth merciable
A faythful hert euer is acceptable

¶ Lenuoye.

For cōplaynt, forth lackyng eloquence
For lytel letter of endytynge lame
I haue besought my ladyes sapience
Of thy behalfe, to accepte in game
Thyn inabilyte, do thou the same
Abyde, haue more yet: Ie serue Iouesse
Now forth, I close the in holy Venus name
The shal vnclose my hertes gouernesse

¶ Thus endeth this balade: And here followeth the boke of Boecius de consolatione philosophie.

Boecius de consolacione philosophie

Carmina qui quōdam studio florēti peregi
Flebilis heu mestos cogor inire modos.

ALas, I wepyng am constrayned to begyn vers of sorowfull matter, that whylom in flouryshynge studye made delytable dytees. For lo, rendynge muses of poetes, endyten to me thinges to be writen, and dicry teeres. At last no drede ne myght ouercome the muses, that they ne were felowes and folouden my way, that is to say: whan I was exiled, they ꝑ weren of my youthe whylom weetful and grene, comforten now sorouful wierdes of me olde man: for elde is comen vnwarely vpon me, hasted by the harmes that I haue, and sorowe hath cōmaunded his age to be in me. Herres hore aren shadde ouertymely che vpon my heed: and the slacke skynne trembleth of myn empted body. Thylke dethe of men is weleful, ꝑ ne cometh nat in veres that be swet, but cometh to wretches ofte iclaped. Alas, alas, with how dede an eere deth cruell turneth awaye fro wretches, & nayeth for to close weping eyen. While fortune vnfaythful fauoured me with light goodes, ꝑ sorowful houre, that is to saye, the dethe, had almoste drevnt myn heed: But nowe for fortune cloudy hath chaūged her deceyuable cheere to me-ward, myne vnpytous lyfe draweth alonge vngreable dwelliges. O ye my frēdes, what or wherto auaunted ye me to ben welfull: for he that hath fallen, stode in no stedfast degre.

Yet

per dum mecū tacitus ipse reputarem, querimoniamqz lacrimabilē stili officio de-signarem: astitisse mihi supra verticem visa sit mulier reuerendi admodū vultus, oculis ardentibus, et vitra communem.ac.

IN the meane whyle that I stil recorded these thinges vp my selfe, & marked my wepely coplaint with office of poyntell: I saugh standynge aboue the hyght of mennes heed, a woman of ful great reuerence, by semblaūt. Her eyen brennyng, and clere, seynge ouer the commen myght of menne, with a lyuely colour, and with suche vigour & strengthe, that it ne myght not ben nempned, al were it so that she were ful of so great age, that men ne wolden nat trowen in no manere that she were of oure elde.

The stature of her was of doutous iudgemente, for someyme she constrayned and thronke her selven lyke to the cōmen mesure of men: And someyme it semed that she touched the heuen with the hight of her hed. And whan she houe her heed hyer, she perced the selfe heuen, so that the sight of men lokig was in ydel: her clothes were maked of right delye thredes and subtel craft of perdurable matiere. The whiche clothes she had wouen with her own houdes, as I knewe wel after by her selfe declaring, and shewing to me the beaute: the which clothes a derkenes of a forleten and dispised elde had dusked & derked, as it is wōt to derke by smoked ymages. In the nethereste hēme or bordour of these clothes, men redde ywouen therin a grekisshe Π. that signifieth the life Actiue, and aboue that letter in the hyeste bordure a grekysshe Θ. that signifieth the lyfe contemplatyfe. And betwē these two letters ther wer sene degrees nobly wrouzt in maner of laddres, by which degrees men myght climben from the neyther-este letter to the vppereste: natheless hādes of some men hadden kerue that clothe by violence or by strength, and euerich man of hem had born away such pees as he might geten And forsoth this forsayd woman bare smale bokes in her right hande, & in her lefte hande she bare a sceptre. And whan she sawe these poetical muses approchyng aboute my bed, and enditynge wordes to my wepynges, she was a lytel amoued, and glowed with cruel eyen. Who, quod she hath suffred approchen to this sicke man these comen strompetes, of which is the place, that men callen Theatre, the which only ne asswagen nat his sorowes with remedies, but they wold feden and nourisshe hym with swete venym. Forsothe that ben tho that with thornes and pikynges of talēres of affections, which that ben nothing fructuous nor profytable, distroye the coue plentuous of fruites of reason. For they holden hertes of men in vsage, but they ne delyuer no folke fro maladye. But if the muses had withdrawē fro me with sour flatteres any an vncunnynge and vnprofitable man, as ben wonte to fynde comenly amonge the people, I wold wel suffre the lasse greuously. For why, in suche an vnprofitable mannes ententes were nothinge endamaged. But sythe withdrawen fro me this man, that hath ben nourysshed in my studyes or scoles of Stoyciens and of Achademicis in Grece. But goth nowe rather away ye mermaydens, ywhiche that ben swete ryl it be at the laste, & suffreth this mā to be cured and heled by my muses, that is to saye, by my norefyul sciences. And thus this company of muses yblamed, caste wrothly the chere downwarde to the erthe, shewing by rednesse her shame, ther passeden sorowfully the thresholde. And I of whome the syght plounged in teres was derked, so that I ne might nat know, what that woman was of so impertall auctorite, I wonder abashed and stoned and cast my sight doune to the erthe, & began stil for to abyde what she wolde done after warde. Than came she nere, & set her down vpon the breest corner of my bed, and she beholdynge my chere that was caste to the erthe, heauy and grendous of wepyng, cōplayned with these wordes that I shal sayne the perturbacion of my thought.

Heu quam precipiti mersa profundo, &c.
Terras habet, et propria luce relicta
Tenebras terrenas ire tenebras, Terrenus quoties fumbus
acta, Crescit in immensum noxia cura. Hic
quondā celo liber aperto &c.

ALas, howe the chevaūce of this man dreynt in ouerthrowynge depnesse, falleth and forleeth his propre clerenesse, inwrenge to gone into forayne derkenesse, as oft as his anoyous busynes wereth without measure, that is driuen with worldelye wyndes.

This man that whilom was free, to whome

the

the heauen was open and knowen, and was wonte to gone in heuenly parties, and ſawe the lyghtneſſe of the reed ſonne, and beheide the ſterres of the colde moone, whiche ſterre in heuen vſeth wandryng recourſes yfayre by dyuers ſpheres. This mā ouercomer had comprehended al thys thynge by numbre of acompteyng in aſtronomye. And ouer this he was wont to ſeken the cauſes, whece the ſownynge windes mouen, and beſyen the ſmothe watter of the ſee. And what ſpirite turneth the ſtable heue. And why the ſterre riſeth out of the reed eſte, to fallen in the weſtren waues. And what atempreth the luſty houres of the firſt ſommer ſeaſon, and lighteth and appareyleth the erth with roſy floures. And who maketh the plenteuous Autumpne in fulle ares ſteren with heuy grapes. And eke thys man was wonte to telle the dyuers cauſes of nature that were hydde. Alas how lightly is empried the light of his thought, and hys necke is preſſed with heuy chaynes, and beareth his chere enclined aboute for the great weight, and is conſtrayned to loken on the foule erthe.

Sed magis medicine inquit tempus eſt quā querele. Boe. Cum vero tota in me mētis lumina fixiſſem. Philo. Quę cū ita ſint qui noſtro quondam lacte nutritus, noſtris eruditus alimentis, in virilis animi robur euaſiſtis. &c.

THe ſtorme is nowe of medicine quod ſhe more than cōplaint I ſeſe by thā he entēdynge to me warde with al the lokyng of her eyen layd. Art not thou he quod he, that vp with my milke, and fedde with my meres, were eſtraped and comen to the coiage of a parfayte man.

Certes I gaue ſuch armours, if thou thy ſelfe ne habbeſt firſt caſt hem away, they ſhul den haue defended the in ſikernelle that may not be ouercomen. Knoweſt thou nat mee why art thou ſtrīcken in for ſhame of for aſtonyng? it were me leuer it were for ſhame, but it ſemeth me that aſtonyng hath oppreſſed the. And whan ſhe ſawe me nat onely ſtyll, but rather without office of tonge and dōbe, ſhe layde her hande ſoftely vpon my breſte, And ſayde: Here is no perill quod ſhe, he is fallen in to a lytrage, whiche that is a comune ſickenes to hertes that be bliſeyued, he hath a lytel forȝeten hym ſelfe. But certes he ſhal lyghtly remembren himſelfe, yf ſo be that he hath knowen me er nowe. And that he maye done ſo, I wyl wype his eyen a lytel that be derked by the cloude of mortal thinges. Theſe wordes ſayd ſhe, and with the lappe of her gar nement yplited in a troūce ſhe dried myn eyen that weren ful of the wawes of my wepinge.

Tunc me diſcuſſa liquerunt nocte tenebre, Luminibusq; prior redit vigor. Vt cum precipiti glomerārur ſidera choro, Atmboſtiq; polus ſteilt imbribus, Sol latet, ac non dum celo bene mentibus aſtris. &c.

THus whan that myght was diſcuſſed away, derkenelle forlete me, and to my eyen payred agayne her firſt ſtrengthe. And right as by enſample, as the ſon is hyd whē the ſterres ben couerde with cloudes, by a ſwift wynde that hyght Thorus, and the firmament ſtante derked by were plungy cloudes. And that the ſterres nat appeten vpon the heauen, ſo that the nyght ſemed ſpradd vpon the erthe. If than the wynde that hyght Boreas, yſente out of the caue of the countreye of Trace, beateth thys myght, that is to ſayne chaſeth it away, and diſcouereth the cloſed dayes. Than ſhyneth peronus vchaken with ſodayne lyght, and ſmyteth with his beames in marueylyng eyen.

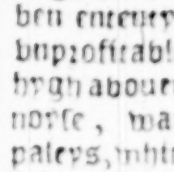
Haud aliter ſerenę nebulis diſſolutis, hauſerium, et ad cognoſcendam medicamis faciem, mentem erexi. Itaq; vbi eam oculos, intuitumq; be fixi, reſpicio nutricem meam in cuius ab adoleſcentia. &c.

RYght ſo a none other wyſe, the cloudes of ſorowe diſſeuered and done away, I roſe beuen and receyued myndere to knowe the face of my phyſicien ſo that I ſette myne eyen vpon her: and fallende my lokynge I beheide my norryce philoſophie in whoſe houſe I had conuerſed fro my youthe, and I ſayde thus. O thou mayſteſſe of al vertues deſcended from the ſouerayn ſeet, why art thou comen in to this ſolytary place of myn exyle? Arte thou comen for thou arte made coulpable with me of falſe blames. O quod ſhe my norryce, ſhulde I forſake the now, I ne

I not

I not parten with the by comen trauaile the charge that thou hall suffred for enuy of my name. Certes it were nat leful ne sittyng to philosophie to leten without companye the way of him that is innocent: Shulde I than adoute my blame, and agrise as though ther wer befallen a new thyng. For trowest thou that philosophie be nowe alder first assailed in perils by folke of wicked maner? Haue I not striuen with full great strife in olde tyme before the age of my Plato, ayenst the foole hardynesse of folye. And eke the same Plato living, his maister Socrates deserued bitternesse of vnrighteful dethe in my presence. The heritage of ꝑ whiche Socrates, the heritage is to sayne the doctryne, of the which Socrates in hys opynyon of felicite, that I deape welefulnesse: whan that the people of Epicurians and Stoicians, and many other enforced them to go ranysthe, euery man for his parte, that is to sayne: that euerych of hem wolde drawen to the defence of hys opynyon the wordes of Socrates. They as in parte of their praye to drowen me cryeng and debatynge therayenst, and corueu and rente my clothes that I had wouen with myne owne handes. And with the clothes that they had raced out of my clothes they wenten away, weninge that I had gon with hem euery dele. In which Epicurians and Stoicians for as muche as there semed some traces & steppes of my habyte. The folye of wenynge the Epicurians and Stoicens my familiers, peruerted hem through the errour of ꝑ wicked multitude of hem: This is to sayne, for they ben philosophers, they weren putted to ꝑ dethe and slayne. Soo if thou halle not knowen the exilynge of Anaxagoras, ne the enprisoning of Socrates ne the turmentes of Zeno, for they weren straungers, yet mightest thou haue knowen the Senecas, the Lucans, and the Soranos: Of whiche folke the studye is nowthet ouer olde ne vnsolempne. The whiche men nothyng elis ne broughte to hir deth, but only for they were enformed of good maners, and semeden moste vnlyke to the maners of wicked folke. And for thy thou oughtest nat to wondren, though that I in ꝑ tempeste be driuen with tempestes blowyng aboute. In the which thys is my moste purpose, that is to sayne to displesen wicked me. Of whiche thewes al be the boothe neuer so grete, it is to despise, for it is not gouerned with no leader of reason, but it is rauyshed onely by sterynge errours, folily and lightlye. And if they somtyme make an hooste ayenst vs, assayle vs as strengers: our leder drawe'ꝫ to gyther his richesses into his tour, and they ben entreuyte aboure sarpiers or sachelles vnprofitable for to taken. But we that ben hygh abouen, ther from al tumulte & woode noise, warnestored and enclosed in suche a paleys, whither as ꝑ clateryng or anoyenge foly may nat attayne, we scorne suche tauntes and hunters of foulest thynges.

Quisquis composito serenus euo, fatum sub pedibus egit superbum: fortunamq; tumens vtramq; rectus, Inutilium potuit timere vultum &c.



Who so it be that clere of ber[illegible] true, sad, and well ordinate of [illegible]uynge, that hath put vnder [illegible] stoore the proude wretches, [illegible] stoken vp or doon either [illegible] fortune, he may nat be[illegible] chere vndiscomfited.

The tages ne the manaces of the fers [illegible] mourning and chafynge vnmate beate [illegible] the borrome, ne shall nat meue that manere, ne the bitable mournayne that bryge [illegible] nus, that writheth out through his troubly [illegible] meneres smokyng fyres, ne the wan of [illegible] der lesse, that is wont to fulsten hye towers ne shal nat meue that manere, al be it so that tyrantes Diede ye tyraunes, that on wode and felonous with any strengthe prepare[illegible] ter nothynge, ne Diede thou nat: and so bi[illegible] thou disarmen the ire of thilke brenninge [illegible] raunne. But who that quakynge dredeth or desyreth thyng that is nat stable, certes in [illegible] that man that so doethe hath cast away his [illegible] shilde, and is remoued fro hys place, and en[illegible] faseth hem in the chayne, with the whiche he may be drawen.

Venus ne meuue ber arga anime [illegible] bumenit nuor. Expers ne es [illegible] Quid des? Quid fachumis manas? Si operam medicamenta expetas, oportet vt vulnus detegas tuum &c.

Elyste thou quod she these thynges? and entrey they aught in thy corage? Art thou lyke an asse to the harpe? Why wepest thou? Why spyllest thou

teres

treres. If ꝑ abydest after helpe of thy leche, the behoueth discouer thy woud. Tho I had gathered strength in my corage and answerd & sayd. And nedeth it (qð I) of rehersing or of amonicion, & thewerth it not ynough by hym self the sharpenesse that werreth wode ayenst me. Se mouveth it nat the to se the face or the maner of this place. Is this the library that thou haddest chosen for a right certayn siege to the in myne house, there as thou disputest oft with me of the science of thynges, touching diuinare and touching mākynde. Was than myn habite suche as it is nowe, was my face or chere such as is now, whā I sought with the secretes of nature, whē thou enformedest my maners and the reason of all my lyfe, to thensample of the ordre of heuen. is not this the guerdō that I referre to the, to whom I haue be obeysaunt. Certes ꝑ enformedest by the mouth of Plato this sentence, that is to sayne: that comen thynges or communalites weren blissful, if they that had studied al fully to wisdom gouerneden thilke thynges: or els if it so befel that the gouernours of communalites studyen to get wisdome. Thou saydest eke by the mouthe of the sayd Plato, that it was a necessary cause, wise me to taken and destryen the gouernaūce of comen thynges, for that the gouernementes of cytes plette i the handes of felonous tourmentours, ever seins ne shulden not bringen in pestilence and distruction to good folke. And therfore I following thylke auctours desired to put forth in execution & in acte of comen administracion thylke thynges, that I had lerned of the among my secrete resting whiles, thou and god that put in the thoughtes of wyse folke, ben knowyng with me, ꝑ nothyng ne brouzt me to maistrye or dignite but the comen studye of all goodnesse. And therfore cometh it that betwene wicked folke and me haue ben grevous discordes, ꝑ ne myghten not be released by prayers: for this liberte hath ꝑ fredome of conscience, that the wrathe of more myghty folke hath alway ben dispised of me for sauacion of ryght. Howe ofte haue I resysted and withstande that man that bryght Canigast, that made alwey thassaute ayenst the prosper fortunes of poore feeble folke. Howe ofte haue I put of or caste out hym Triguyl prouost of the kynges house, bothe of the wronges that he had begonne to done, and eke fully performed. Howe often haue I covered & defended by the auctorite of me put ayenst perils, that is to sayne: put myne auctorite in preyl for the wretched poore folke that the coueityse of straungers vnpunyshed turmenteden alway with miseases and grevaūces out of nombre. Neuer man yet drow me fro ryght to wronge. When I sawe the fortunes and the ryches of the people of ꝑ prournces ben harmed and amenused, either by priuy rauynes or by comen tributes or taages, as sory was I as they that suffered the harme. Glose. When that Theodorike kynge of Gothes in a dere yere had his garners full of corne, and commaunded that no man shulde bye no corne tyll hys corne were solde, & at a grevous dere prise: Croce with sode that ordinaunce, and ouercame it, knowing al this the kyng Theodorike him selfe. Corruptiō is to saye comen achate or breng togyther, that were stablished vpon the people by suche a maner imposicyon, as who so bought a busshel of corne, he muste geuen the kynge the fyfte parte. Tertus. When it was in the sore hongry tyme, there was stablyshed grevous and vnprofytable corruption, that men sene wel it shulde greatly turmenten and endomagen all the prournce of Campayne. I toke stryfe ayenst the prouost of the preteire for the comē profyte. And the knowyng of it, I ouercame it, so that the corruption was not asked ne toke effecte.

Paulyne a counsaylour of Rome, thryche of the whiche Paulyne the hondes of the palays, that is to saye, thofficers wolden haue deuoured by hope & coueytise yet drowe I out of the iowes of hem that gapedē. And for as muche as the payne of the accusation a iudged before ne shulde not so dauntyben ten ne punyben wrongefullye. Albyn a counsaylour of Rome, I put me ayenst the hates and indignacyons of the accusour Ciprian. Is it not than ynough sens that I haue purchased great discordes ayenst my selfe. But I ought be more assured ayenst other folke, that for the loue of ryghtwisnesse I neuer reserued nothyng to my selfe, to ben warde of the kynges hall, by whiche I were the more syker. But through the same accusours accusynge I am condempned. Of the nombre of whiche accusours one Basilius that whilome was chased out of the kynges seruyce, is nowe compelled in accusyng of my name, for nede of forayne monye. Also Opylyon

and

and Gaudencius haue accused me: All be it so that the iustice regall had whylom demed them bothe to gone in to exyle for her trechery and fraudes without nombre. To which iudgement they nolde nat obey, but defended hem by the sykernesse of holy houses, that is to sayne, stedden in to seynturary: And than whan this was apperceyued by the kynge, he cómaunded but if they voyded the cyte of Rauenne by certayne daye assygned, that menne shulde marken hem on þ forheed with an hote yron, and chasen hem out of the towne. Now what thing semeth myght be lykened to thys cruelte, for certes this same daye was receyued the accusyng of my name by thylke same accusours. What may be sayd hereto, hath my studye and my connynge deserued thus, or els the forsayde dampnacyon of me made them ryghtfull accusours or no. Was nat fortune a shamed of thys. Certes al had nat fortune ben a shamed that innocence was accused, yet ought she haue had shame of the frithe of myne accusours. But aske thou in some of what gylte I am accused. Men sayne that I wouldé sauen the companye of the senatours. And desyrest thou to herein in what maner I am accused, that I shuld haue disturbed the accusour to beaten letters, by which he shuld haue made the senatours gylty ayenst þ kynges royal maieste. O mayster, what demest thou of this, shall I forsake this blame, that I ne be no shame to the. Certes I haue wolde it (that is to saye) the sauacion of the senate, ne I shall neuer lette to wylne it, and þ I confesse and am a knowe, but thentent of þ accusoure to ben disturbed shal cease. Shal I clepe þ a felonye or a synne that I haue desyred the sauacion of the ordre of þ senate. And certes had thilke same senate done through her decretes and her iudgemẽtes as though it were a synne and a felony, þ is to wylne the sauacion of them. But solve that lyeth alway to him selfe, may not chaunge the merytes of thynges, ne I trowe not by the iudgemente of Socrates þ it were lefull to me to hyde the sothe, ne assente to leasynges: but certes howe so euer it be of this, I put it to gessen or pysen of the iugement of the and of wyse folke, of whyche thynge all the ordynaunce and the sothe for as moche as folke that ben to comen after oure dayes shall knowen it) I haue put it in scripture and in remembraunce. For touchyng the letters falsely made, by whyche letters I am accused to haue hoped the fredom of Rome, what apertayneth me to speken thereof. Of whyche letters the fraude had ben shewed apertely, yf I had had libertye for to haue bleo and bene at confessyon of myne accusours, the whyche thynge in all nedes hath great strength. For what other fredome may men hopen. Certes I wold þ some other fredom myght be hoped, I wold thé haue answered by þ wordes of a man þ hyght Camus: for whan he was accused of Caurus, Cesar Germanes sonne, þ he was knowynge and consentyng of a conuracion ymade ayenst him. This Camus answered thus: yf I had wyst it, thou haddest nat wyst it. In which thyng forsoth hath nat dulled my wytte, þ I playne ones þ diuerse folke apparaylen felonyes against hem but I wónder greatly how þ they may performe thinges that they haue hoped for to done, for why ne wol ne thexecucion be that comyth parauenture of our defaute. But it is ful a meruayle and a meruayle howe that myne purpos syght of god, may bene ashuned and destourbed suche thynges, as cursed felonous mynde hath conceyued in hys thought ayenst me certes. For whych thynge one of the lyers not vnskylfully asked thus (þ) whence comen wicked thinges. It ben leful that felonous folke, that sysen the bloode and the deth of al goodnesse. And eke of the Senate, haue wylled to destroyen me, whome they haue seen alway batayllen and defenden good men and eke al the senate, that had nat deserued of hem (that is to sayne of the senatours) that they shulden wol my destruccion. Thou remembrest wel as I gesse, þ whan I wold done or sayne auye thynge, thou the self alwaye presente ruledest me. Yf the cyte of Rauenne whan that the kynge greedy of comen slaughter, caste hym to transporten vpon all the ordre of the senate the gylte of his royal maieste, of the whiche gylte that Albyn was accused, with howe great sykernesse of peril to me, defended I all the senate: Thou wotest wel that I saye sothe, ne I ne auaunted me neuer in prayseynge of my selfe. For alwaye whan any wyght receyueth precyous renome in auaunteynge of hem selfe or hys werkes, he amenuiseth the fayrnesse of his conscyence.

But nowe thou mayste well sene to what ende I am comen for myne innocencye, I receyue payne of false felonye, for gwerdone of very vertue. And what open confessyon of felonye had euer iudges so accordaunte in crueltie, that is to sayne, as myne accusynge hath, that eyther errour of mannes wytte, or els condicion of fortune, that is vncertaun to al mortall folke me submytted some of hem, that is to say, that it me enclyned some tuge to hauepyte or compassion. For although I had bene accused that I wold brenne holy houses, and strangle prestes with wycked swerde, or that I had greythed deth to al good men, algates the sentence shuld haue punished me present confessed & conuicte. But nowe I am remoued from the eyte of Rome almoste .C. M. paas, I am without defence dampned to proscripcion and to deth, for the studies & bounties that I haue don to the senate. But o wel hem they worthye of mercie, as who sayth: may there might ye nowre none of hem be conuicte of suche a blame as myne is. Of whiche trespace myn accusours seen ful wel the dignite, for they wold bereuen it with medlyng of some felonye. They baren me on honde and sayd that I had polute and defouled my conscience with sacrilege for couetise of dignite: and certes thou thy selfe that arte planted in me, chaerdest out of the surge of my corage all couetise of mortall thynges, me sauyinge me had no leaue to haue a place in me before thin eyen, for thou stoppedest euery dore in myne eyen & in my thought thilke commaundement of Pithagoras that is to say: men shall serue men to god and not to gobbes. Ther was not commaunde or none me be to taken helpe of the foulest spirites. I that thou hadst ostrigned and sette in suche excellence, that thou madest me lyke to god, and ouer thys the right cleane secrete chambre of myn house, that is to saye my wyfe, and the compayne of myne honeste frendes, and my wyues father, as wel holy as worthy to be reuerenced for his dedes, defenden me from all suspecyon of suche blame.

But oh malyce. For they that accusen me taken of the philosophie seyth of so gret blame, for they trowen that I haue habbe affinite to maleficye or enchaũtement, bicause that I am replenisshed and fulfilled with thy techynges and enformed of thy maners. And thus it sufficeth not onely þ thy reuerence ne auelle me naughte, but yf thou of thy freewyll rather be blemysshed with myne offencyon. But certes to the harmes that I haue, there betideth yet this encrease of harme, that the gessynge and the iugement of muche folke ne loken no thyng to the desertes of thynges, but only to the auenture of fortune, and iudgen that only such thinges ben puruyed of god, which that temporall wilfulnesse cõmaundeth. Glose. Is thus, that if a wight haue prosperite, he is a good man, and worthy to haue that prosperyte, & whoso hath aduersyte, he is a wicked man, and god hathe forsake him, & he is worthy to haue þ aduersite. This is the opynyon of some folke, and thereof cometh that good gessyng fyrst of al thynge forsaked wretches. Certes it greueth me to thinke ryght nowe in dyuers sentences that the people sayth of me. And thus moche I say, that the last charge of contrarious fortune is this, that whan any blame is layde vpon a carefe, men wenen þ he hath deserued that he suffreth. And I that am put away from good men, and bispotted of dignites, and defouled of my name by grieuyng haue suffred turmentes for my good dedes. Certes me semeth þ I se the triumphe couynes of wicked men baboulden in ioye and in gladerne, and I se that euery lorel shapeth him to fynde new fraudes for to accuse good folke, & I se that good folke be ouerthrowen for the drede of my perill, and euerye lewednes turmentour hath bent al frendy purpos cheth, and be ereud therto by reftes, & mischefes be not only bispeyed of enemies, but of beter, & therto me bit [illegible] to god i this maner.

O thou fermer conditor orbis, Qui perpetuo manes solio, stabilisq; rotu turbine terras, Lege grauis patet fibra regis, tibi nutat plenis lucida cornu Cynthia fratris obuia flammis. Cedunt stellas luna minores: Hanc obtegit pallida cornu phebe propinqui lumina perdat, &c.

THou maker of the whele þ beareth the sterres, whiche þ arte faithfully thy perdurable chayre, and turnest the heauen with a rauesshynge force, and constraynest the sterres to suffre thy lawe: so that the Moone some tyme thynenge with her full hornes, meynge with all the beames of the sonne her brother, hydeth the sterres that ben lesse. And some tyme whan the moone pale, with her derke hornes appro-

approcheth the sonne, leseth her lyghtes: and that the ruyn sterre Hesperus, whyche that in the firste tyme of the nyght bringeth fyrst her colde attisig, cometh eft ayen her vsed courte, and is pale by the morowe at rysynge of the sonne, and is than yeleped Lucifer. Thou restraynest the daye by shorter dwellynge in the tyme of the colde wynter, that maketh ꝑ leaues fall. Thou deuydest the fowre types of the nyght, whan the hote somer is comen. Thy might attempereth ꝑ vayraunt seasons of the yeare, so that zepherus the debonaire wynde bringeth ayen in the first sommer season, the leues that the wynd that hight Boreas, hath rafte away in Autumpne, that is to saye, the laste rube of somer, and the sedes that sterre that hight Arcturus sowe, be wont bygh corne, whan the sterre Gnidius enchaufeth hem. There is nothyng vnbounden from this olde lawe, ne forleteth ꝑ werke of his propre estate.

Thou gouernour, gouerning al thynges by stedefaste ende, why refuseth thou onely to gouerne ꝑ werkes of men by lyke maner? Why suffred thou, that fleyng fortune turneth to grete interchaunges of thynges, so that innocente payne that shulde haue punisshe felons, punisheth innocentes. And folke of wicked maners lyuen in bygh chayres, and auoweng folke tremble, and that ryghtfulnesse ꝺ the archas of holy men. And betwix sterre and thynge naturally is hydde in lyke desertes, and the ryghtful man beareth ꝑ payne and the blame of the felons. Whether fortune maye be the fraude couered and kempt with a fayre colour, ne amoueth nought thereafter the mynde of the ryghtful. whan hem lyft alle her strength, they trouble hem to put hem the foule ayre thynges vnder that ꝑ people without nombre burden. O thou that lo rulest thou be that knyttest all bondes of thynges, loke on these wretches erthes, ne ne that ben not a foule parte, but a fayre parte of so grete a werke: but ben tormented in this see of fortune. O thou gouernour, haue pite and restreyne the tempestyng floo des, and fasten and ferme these erthes stable, with thilke bonde, with whiche ꝑ gouerneste heuen that is so large.

Hec vbi continuato dolore detexerat talia dicta placido, mitibus meis quibus dixi. Cum te inquit merita, facinorumque tuorum qualitates miseris exulemus cognouisse, quod quidem grauissimum esset exilium.

When I had with a contynuall sorowe sobbed or broken oute these thynges, the which her chere perible, and nothyng amoued with my cõplaintes, I said thus. When I saye the quod she sorowfull and weepynge, I wolde anon that thou were a wreche and exiled: But I wolde neuer hope sette thyne exile was, yf thy tale ne had vtterd it me. But certes all be thou fette fro thy countrey, thou nart not put oute of it, but thou hast fayled of thy waye & gone a mysse. And if thou hadde ieuer fore were that thou be put out of thy countre, than hadd thou put out thy selfe, rather than any other ryght hath for no bughe but thou thy selfe ne might neuer haue done that to thee. Forf thou remembre the of what countre thou art borne, it was nat gouerned by Emperours ne by gouernement of multitude, as were the countreys of hem of Athenes, but one lorde and one kyng, and that is god that is lord of the countrey, whiche that reioyseth hem of A dwelling of his citezens, and not fayne to put hem in exyle. If the whiche lorde is a dome to be gouerned ye pryde of hem ꝺ they to his suffre, and thou forgete the olde lawe of the cite in the whiche ye ben obeyned and ylad, but ben ware and take hede whether it be expedient to thee to be exyled fro thens where ye ought be ryght from that place. For who that is not exyled fro his countrey, but who that leseth ꝑ wyll to be, he semeth alleye to be exyled. Thinke ye that I say that the fate of the place ne moueth me not a myte, whether ye ben exyled in the place of the rotatyf apparayled and wyth ryght and with glad chere after the course of thy thynges in whiche I purpose to haue bookes, but I put that that maketh bookes worthy of pryse or prayse, is to fayre lyue of my bokes. And certaynly of the bokes ꝺ ye haue vsed in comen good. And sayd of the but after ꝑ multitude of the good dedes thou hast and leue. And of the bonefyte or of the fa ryende of thynges ꝺ bene opposed against me, I haue remembred thynges ꝑ be knowen to all folke. And of the felonyes and fraudes of thy accusours, it semeth ꝺ to haue tou ched it forsoth rightfully & shortly: all myght-

ben tho same thynges better and more pleneu ously ben couthe in the mouthe of the people that knoweth all thys. Thou haste eke blamed greatly and cõplayned of the wrongfull dede of the Senate. And thou haste sorowed for my blame, & thou hast wopen for the dommage of thy renoum þ is apeyred: & thy last sorowe enchased aven fortune, complayneste the guerdons ne be not cuenly yolden to the desertes of folke. And in thy latter ende of thy woode muse, thou prayeste that thylke peace that gouerneth the heuen shulde gouerne the erthe. But for that manye trybulacions of affections haue assayled the, and sorowe & ire and wepyng to drawen the dyuerslly, as thou art nowe feeble of thought, myghtyer remedyes ne shullen not yet touchen the, for which we wyllen somdele vsen lyghter medicynes, so that thylke passyons that be waxen harde in swellyng by perturbacions flowynge in to thy thoughte, mowen ware eafy and softe to receiue the strength of a more mighty & more egre medycyne by an easier touchyng.

Cum phebi radius graue Cancri sidus ineſt uat. Tum qui iargo negantibus, Dulcis ſe mina credidit, Eſuſus Cereris fide, Quarnas gergat ad arbores. Nũquam purpureũ nemus Lectur⁹ violas petas. &c.

When that þ heuy sterre of þ Cancre enchaseth by þ beames of Phebus: that is to saine, & hã that Phebus the sunne is in þ signe of the Cancre, whoso euer than largely his sedes to þ feldes þ refusen to receiue hem, let him gone begyled of trust þ he had to his corne, to akehornes of okes. Yf þ wylte gather violettes, ne go thou nat to the purple wodde, whan the felde chirkynge agryseth of colde, by the felnesse of the wynde that hyght Aquilone. Yf thou desyrest or wilt vse grapes, ne seke thou nat a gloutons honde to straynе and presse the stalkes of the vyne in the firste somer season. For Bacchus the god of wyne, hathe rather yeuen his yefres to Autumpne þ latter ende of sommer. Godtokeneth and assygneth the tymes ablynge hem to her propre offyces, ne he suffreth not the stoũdes, which that him selfe hath deuyded and cõstrayned to ben vnedled togyder: and for thy he þ forsetteth certayne ordynaunce of doyng by ouerthrowing way, he ne hath no glad issue or end of his werkes.

Plenum igitur, pateris ne me pauculis tragacionibus statum tue mẽtis attingere, atq; tentare, vt quis modus sit tue curationis intelligam. &c.

First woldeste thou suffre me to touche and assaye the estate of thought by a fewe demaũdes, so þ I may vnderstand by, the maner of thy curacion. Aske me (qõ I) at thy wyll, þ thou wolt, & I shall answere. Tho sayde she thus: Whether weneste þ (qõ she) þ thys worlde be gouerned folysshly by happes and fortunes, or els weneste thou that there be in it any gouernement of reason? B. Certes (qõ I) I ne trowe nat in no maner that so certayne thynges shulde be moued by Fortunous fortune, but I wote wel that god, maker and mainter is gouernour of his werke, ne was neuer yet day that might put me out of the fortunelle of that sentẽce. P. So is it (qõ she) for the same thyng sange thou a litel here beforne, and bewayledeste and wepteste, that onely men were put out of þ cure of god, for of all other thynges thou ne doureste nat, that they were gouerned by reason. But ought, I wonder certes gretly why that thou art sicke, sens that thou arte put in so holsome a sentence: But let vs seken deper. I conceyte that there lacketh I not what. But say me this. Sens that thoune doureste not þ this world be gouerned by god, with which gouernayle takeste thou hede that it is gouerned? Tmeth (qõ I) kno we I the sentence of thy questyon, so that I ne mave not yet ansueren to thy demaundes. I was not disceyued (qõ she) þ there ne fayled some what, by whiche the malady of perturbacyon is crepte in to thy thought, so as the strength of thy palcys shynynge is open: but saye me this. Remẽbrest thou what is thende of thynges, and whyder thentencion of all kynd tendeth. I haue herde tolde it some tyme (qõ I) but dreynesse hath dulled my memory. Certes (qõ she) thou wotest wel whence all thynges be comen & proceden. I wote wel (qõ I) and answerde, that god is begynnynge of all. And how may this be (qõ she) that sens thou knowest the begynning of thinges, that thou ne knowest nat what is the ende of thynges, but suche ben the customes of perturbacyon, and this power they han, that they may moue a man from his place, that is to say, from the stablenesse

stablenesse and perfectyon of his knowynge, but certes they may nat al arace hym, nē alien hym in all: but I wolde that thou woldest answerr to this. Remēbrest thou that thou arte a man? B. Why shulde I not remembre that? qō I. Phi. Wayst thou not tell me than (qō he) what thynge is a man? Wheest thou not me (qō I) whether that I be a resonable man? tell best, I wote well and confesse that I am it. Wylte thou neuer yet that thou were anye other thyng (qō he)? No (qō I). Nowe well knowe I (qō he) other cause of thy maladye, and that righte great: Thou hatte lefte for to knowen thy selfe what thou art, through whiche I haue playnly founden the cause of thy malady, or els the cure of recouerynge of thy heale. For why? For thou art confounded with forgetynge of thy selfe: For thou sorowest that thou art exiled of thy propre goodes. And for thou ne wylte what is thende of thynges, for thy demest thou that felonous and wikked men, be myghty and welful: and for thou hast forgeten by whiche gouernementes the worlde is gouerned, for thy wenest thou that these mutacions of fortune fleten without gouernour. These ben the causes not only to malady, but eftes gret causes to deth: But I thanke the autour and the maker of heale, that nature hath not al forleten the. I haue great nourisshyng of thyn heale, and that is the sothe sentence of gouernaunce of the world, that thou beleuest that the gouernynge of it is not submitte ne bitaught to the folye of these happes aventurous, but to the reason of god, and therfore doute the nothing, for of this lytel sparke thyne heate of lyfe shall shyne. But for as much as it is not time yet of sadder remedies, and that nature is of thoughtes thus discerned, that as ofte as they caste awaye sothe opynyons, they clothen hem in false opinions. Of the which false opinions the derkenesse of perturbacyon wexeth vp, that confoundeth the eye in sight. And that derkenesse shal I somwhat assaye to maken thynne and weake, by light and meanelyche remedies, so that after that the derkenesse of disceyuyng thynges be done awaye, thou maye knowe the shynynge of very lyght.

Nubibus atris condita nullum fundere possunt sydera lumē. Si mare volvens turbidus auster misceat ellum: Turrea duorum, Parqz serenus. &c.

The sterres couered with blacke cloudes ne mowe yeue aboumo lyght, yf the trouble wynde the lyghte Auster, turnynge and walowyng the see medleth the here, that is to sayne the bostynge vp from the botom. The wawes that were whylom clere as glasse, alyke to the fayre bryght dayes, wythstande amon the syghtes of men, by the frithe and ordure that is resolued. And the sterrynge sterne that reyleth downe dyuersly from hygh mountaynes is arrested and resysted ofte tyme by the encountrynge of a stone, that is departed & fallen from some rothe. And for thy yf thou wylte loken and deme sothe with clere lyght, and holden the way with a righte path, bewhe thou toy, dryue fro the bothe, deme thou hope, deie no sorow approche, that is to sayne: Let non of these four passyons ouercome or bleue the. For cloudy & derke is thilke thought & bounde with bridels, where as these thynges reigne.

Explicit liber primus.

Post hec paulisper obticui, atqz tbi attentionem meam modesta cunctatione collegit, sic erorsa est. Si penitus ea nouissem tua causas, haburamqz. &c.

After this the lady a while and after that she had gadered by a temperate demenesse myne attendaunce, who so might fayn thus. After these thynges she stynte a lytell, and whan she apercevued by a temperate stylnesse, that I was entryst to bestowe the beg i to speke in this wise. Yf I had the hole understonden & knowen verely, the causes & the habite of thy malady, thou hast defected for desyre and talent of thy creature fortune. The lyke fortune onelye that is chaunged as thou farnest to the warde, hath peruerted the clerenesse and the estate of thy corage. I understonde thy fele or many forme colours and diseases of thylke meruaylous monstre fortune, and I owe the vieth full watering familiarite with hem that she enforceth to begyle, so longe, till that she confounde with vnsuffrable sorowe, hem that she hathe lefte in disparte vnpurueyed. And yf thou remembrest well the kynde, the maners, and the de-

serte of thilke foztune, thou shalt wel knowe that as in her thou neuer ne haddest, ne haste yloste anye fayre thynge: But as I trowe I shal not greatly trauayle to done the remembren on these thynges. For thou were wonte to hurtelen and dispysen her with many wordes, whan she was bladisshyng and presente, and pursuedst her with sentences that weren drawen oute of myne entre, that is to saye, of myn enformacion: but no sodayne mutacyon ne betydeth not without a maner chaungyng of corages. And so it is befal, that thou arte a lytel departed fro the peace of thy thoughte, but now is tyme that thou drynke and araste some soft and delytable thynges, so that whā they be entred within the, it mowē make way to stronger drinkes of medycins. Come nowe forth therfore the fusshon of swetnesse retho-ryen, whiche that goeth onely the right way, whyle she forsaketh nat myne estatutes. And with Rethorike come forthe musyke a damoysell of oure house, that syngeth nowe in softer modes or prolacions and nowe beauyer.

What ayleth the mā? What is it? hath caste the in to mourning? in to wepynge? I trowe that thou haste sene some newe thyng and vncouthe? Thou wenest that foztune be chaunged ayen me, but thou wenest wronge: it that thou were alway the bene her manere. She hath rather kepte as to the warde, her propre stablenesse in the chaūgyng of her slitefty: yet suche was she whan he flatered the and deceyued the, with vnlefull delyces and false welefulnesse. Thou haste nowe knowen and attreme ye doubtous or double vysage of thilke blynde gobbelle foztune. She that yet couereth and wymplethe her to other folke, hath shewed her selfe ouer hir to the: yf thou approuest her and thynkest that she is good, vse her maners and playne the nat, and yf thou agryefest her false trecherye, despyse and caste away her that playeth so harmefully, for she that is nowe cause of so much sorowe to the, shulde be to the cause of peace and of ioye. She hath forsaken the forsothe, the which that neuer man maye be syker that she ne shall forsaken him. Blose. But natheles some bokes haue the errer thus. Forsothe she hathe forsaken the, ne there nys no man syker that she ne hath nat forsaken. Holdest thou than thylke welefulnesse precious to the that shall passen, and is present foztune betwixte ye, whiche that nys not faythfull foz to dwell, and whan she gothe awaye that she bringeth a wight in sorowe. For sens she maye not be withholden at a mannes wyll, she maketh hym a wrecche whan she departeth fro hym. What other thynge is flyttynge foztune, but a maner shewyng of wretchydnesse that is to come. Nett sufficeth not onely to loken on thynge that is present before the eyen of a mā, but wysdom loketh and mesureth thende of thynges, and the same chaūgyng from one to another, that is to sayne, from aduersyte in to prosperyte, maketh that 3 manaces of foztune ne ben not foz to dreden, ne the flatteryngе to be desyred. Thus at laste it behoueth the to suffren with euen wyl in pacyence, all that is done within the floore of foztune, that is to sayn in this worlde. Sithe thou hast ones put thy necke vnder the yoke of her. For if thou wolt wryen a lawe of wedyng and of dwelling to foztune, whiche that thou hast chosen freely to ben thy lady: Arte thou nat wrongfull in that, ā maketh foztune wroth and asperr by thyne impacience, and yet thou mayst nat chaungen her.

Yf thou committest and betakest thy sayles to the wynde, thou shalt be thoven nat thider that thou woldest, but whider that the wynde lyketh the. Yf thou casteth thy seedes in the feldes, thou shalt haue in mynde that the yeres ben amonges otherwhyle plentyous, and otherwhyle barayn. Thou hast betaken thy selfe to ye gouernaunce of foztune, and for thy it behoueth the to ben obeysaunt to ye maners of thy lady. Enforcest thou the to arresten or withholden the flyttynesse and the swyftnesse of her rennyng wheel? O thou fole of al mortal folke, if foztune began to dwell stable, she ceseth than to ben foztune.

Nec cum superba bellerit voces berra. Et effluantis more ferrat Europi. Duba tremendos sese protexit tegis. Humilesq; vicem subeuat fallax bulla. Mouilla dura miseros ambit, haud curat fletus ac.

When foztune is a proud right hand she turneth her chaūging moodes, she fareth like the maners of the boilynge Europe. Glosa. Europe is an arme of ye see, that ebbeth and floweth and some tyme the streme is on o syde and somtyme on that other.

Texte. She trewel foztune casteth about kynges

thynges, that whylom weren ydrad, and the deceyuable enhaunceth vp the humble cheer of hym that is discomfited: ne she neyther heareth ne recketh of wretched wepynges. And she is so hard, that she laugheth and scorneth the wepyng of hem, the whiche she hath maked to wepe with her fre wyl. Thus she playeth and thus she proueth her strengthes, and sheweth a great wonder to al her seruauntes, if that a wight is seen welefull, and ouerthrowen an houre.

Vellem autem pauca tecum, Fortune ipsa verbis agitare. Cui igitur ait tus postulet animaduertere. P. Quid tu o homo cessas me agis colloquamur questus. &c.

Ires I wold pleden with the a fewe thynges, vnyng the wordes of fortune: take hede nowe thy self, yf that the aske ryght. O thou man, wherfore makest thou me gylty by thy euery dayes playntinges?

What wronge haue I done the? what goodes haue I bereft the that were thyne? stryue in place here with me before what iuge that thou wylt, of the possession of ryches, or of dignites, and if thou maist shewe me, that euer any mortall manne hath receyued any of thy thynges to hem his in propre, tha wil I graunt the, that thyne thynges were thyn, whiche that thou askest. Whan that nature brought the forth out of thy mothers wombe, I receyued the naked and nedy of al thynges, and I nourysshed the with al my ryches and delytes, and was redy and enuious to thy fauour to thy fantasie. What maketh the now enpayred enuenime me. And I enuyronned the with habondaunce and ryches of all goodes, that ben in my ryght: nowe it lyketh me to withdrawe myn honde. Thou hast had grace as he that hath vsed foreyne goodes. Thou hast no ryght to playne the, as though thou haddest vtterly forlorne al thy thynges. Why playnest thou thanne? I haue done to the no wronge. Ryches, honours, and such other thynges ben of my ryght. My seruauntes knowen me for her lady: they come with me, & depart when I wende. I dare wel affirme hardely, that if the thynges, of whiche thou playnest that thou hast forlorn had ben thyn, thou ne haddest nat forlorne he. What I than be defended only to vse my ryght? Certes it is leful to the heuen to make clere dayes, and after to ouercome the same dayes with derke nyghtes. The yere hath eke leaue to apparayle the vysage of the erthe, nowe with flowres, and nowe with fruite, and to confounde hem sometyme with tempes and with colde.

The see hath eke his ryght to ben sometyme cauline & blandisshynge, with smothe water, and sometyme to be horrible with waues & with tempestes. But coueyte of men, that may not be staunched, shal it be me to be defaute, if thenchat stedfastnesse is vnknowen to my maners. Suche is my strength, and suche play I play comenly. I turne the worldynge whele with the turnynge cercle. I am glad to chaungen the lowest to the hyest, & the hyest to the lowest. Come vp if thou wolte, vpon this lawe, that thou ne holde nat that I do the wrong, though thou descende adowne, whan the reason of my play asketh it. Wilte thou not how Cresus kyng of Lydees of whiche kyng Cyrus was full fore agaste, and bisette him in the flambe of a fyre, and lyfte him vp into the heyght of a gybet, and made him to be bounde, but that a rayne descended from heuen & quenched the fyre? And is out of mynde how that Paulus consul of Rome, whan he had taken the kyng of Perseus, ladde him bounde in his triumphe? Whan Nero had taken the empire of his brother, what other thynges sownen the tragedies of tragedies, but that he dyde of fortune, & turned al his cruelte vpon the tranes of great maistery? Tragedie is to fame a dede of a fyers fortune for a tyme. Fynally in myne house I kepe two yates. Wilte not thou wete what thynges they ben? that on is ful of good, that other is ful of harme. What ryght hast thou to playne? if thou hast taken more plenteously of the good fortune, that is to sayne of ryches & prosperite, and more ese if I be not al departed from the. Hast thou not hope that if my mutabilite weneth the ryghtful cause of hope to haue yet better thynges? Elles thou maye ben out of thy thought. And thou that art put in the comune realme of al, ne desyre not to lyuen by thyn owene proper ryght.

Quotquot rapidis flatibus incitus pontus versat arenas. Aut quot nitentes cernit noctibus sydera fulgere: Quas fundat opes, nec terrarum finium plena copia coercuit: Humanum mineras haud ideo genus

Sygnii. Cesse

Cesset iam querelas.&c.

Thoughe plenty goddesse of riches, bylde adowne with a full horne, and withdrawe not her hande, as manye rychesse as the see turneth vpwarde sandes, whan it is moued with rauyshynge blastes, or els as manye rychesses as there shinen bright sterres in the heuen on the sterry nyghes: yet for all that mankynde nold not cesse to wepe wretched plaintes. And al be it so that god receyued her prayers, and yeueth hem as foole large muche golde, & apparayleth couetous folke with noble or clere honours: yet semeth him haue gotté nothyng: But alway cruel rauyne deuourynge al that they haue goten, shewith other gapynges, þ is to saye, gapen and desyren yet more rychesses. What bridels might withholden to any certayne rule the disordinate couetyse of men, whã euer the rather þ it sterith in large yeftes, the more brẽneth in hem the lust of hauing? Certes he þ quakyng & dredful weneth him selfe nedy, he ne lyueth neuermore riche.

Dis igitur, si pro se tecum, verbis fortuna loqueretur, quid profecto cõtrahiceres, non haberes. Iust quidem, quo querelam tuam iure incuses, proferas oportet.

Therfore if that fortune spake with thee for her self in this maner, for othe thou ne haddest nat what thou myghtest answere. And yf thou hast any thynge, wherwith thou mayst ryghtfully defenden thy complaynte, it behoueth the to shewe, & I wol seuen to the space to tellen it. Boece. Certaynly quod I than, these bẽ fayre thinges, & anoynted with hony sweetenesse of rethorike & musyke, and onely whyle they ben herde: and sownen eeres, they ben delicious. But to wretches it is a deper feling of harme, this is to sayn, þ wretches felen þ harmes þ they suffre more greuously, than the remedies or the delites of these wordes may gladden or confoxten hem. So that whan these thinges stynten for to sownen eares, þ sorow that is inset greueth þ thought. Ph. Right so it dothe (qõ she). For these ne ben yet no remedies of the malady, but they bẽ a maner norisshynge of thy sorowes, that rebell ayẽst thy curacion. For whan tyme is, I shall moue & aiust suche thynges, that perceyuen ful depe. But natheless that thou shalte not wayne to leten thy selfe a wretche. Haste thou forveten the numbre and þ maner of thy welefulnesse. I speake not howe that the soueraygne men of the citye toke the in cure and kepynge, whan thou were orphelyn of father and of mother, and were chosen in affynite of princes of the cite. And thou begannest rather to be lefe a dere, than for to be a neyghbour, the whiche thyng is the moste precious kynde of any propynquite or alliaunce þ mayen ben. Alors is it that ne sayde tho that thou ne were ryght welefull, with so great nobley as thy fathers in lawe, and with the chastite of thy wyfe, and with thopportunite and noblesse of thy masculyne children, that is to sayn, thy sonnes. And ouer al thys (me lyste to passen of comune thinges) how thou haddest in thy youth dignities, þ were warned to olde men, but it delyteth me now to cõmen to the singuler vpheapynge of thy welfulnesse. If any fruit of mortal thinges may haue any wight or price of welefulnesse, myghtest thou euer forveten for any charge of harme that myght betal, the remembraunce of thylke daye, that thou saw thy two sonnes made cõsailours, and ladde togyther from thy house, vnder so great assemble of senatours, and vnder the blythenesse of the people: and whan thou sawe hem sitte in the court in thye chayres of dignities. Thou rethorien or pronoũcer of kinges prayslynges deseruedest glorye of witte and of eloquence, whan thou sittinge betwene thy two sonnes counsaylours, in the place that hight Circo, and fulfilledest the byddyng of the moultytude of people that was spradabout the with so large prayseng and laude, as men synge in victories. Thou haue thought fortune as I trowe, that is to say, thou scoffedest thou fortune with glorious wordes, & deceyuedest her, whan the acoyed & norished the as her owne delices. Thou bare a vaye of fortune a yefte, that is to saye suche guerdon that she neuer vaue to priuate mã. Ac thou therfore laye a rekenynge with fortune? She hath nowe first ywrieled vpon þ with a wikked eye. If thou considere the nombre and the maner of thy blisses and of thy sorowes, thou mayst nat forsaken that nat yet bysyde. For if therfore thou weneth thy selfe not welefull for tho thinges that semeden ioyful ben passed ther ne is not why thou shuldest seme thy selfe

a wrecche.

a wretche, for thynges ꝑ semen now foxy, passen also. Art thou nowe comen a sodayne gest into the shadow or tabernacle of this life? or trowest thou that any stedfastnesse be in mānes thinges? Whan oft a swifte houre dissolueth the same man, that is to saye, whan the soule departed from the body. For al thoughe that selde is there any fayrthe that fortunous thynges wold dwellen, yet natheleſſe the last daye of a mannes lyfe is a maner deth to fortune, and also to thilke that hath dwelte. And therfore what weneſt thou dare recke if thou forlether in dyeng, or els that the fortune forlete the in fleyng awaye.

Cum polo phebus roſeis quadrigis Lucē ſpergere cepit, Paller albentes hebetata vultus flammis ſtella prementibus. ac.

When phebus the sonne begynneth to sprede hys clerenesse with rosen charlottes, thanne the sterre dymmed paleche her whyte cheres by the flambes of the sōne that ouerōmeth the sterre light, that is to sayne whan ꝑ sonne is rysen, the daye sterre wexeth pale & leseth her lyght. For the greatlightnesse of the sonne, whē ꝑ wode wexeth rodi of rosē flowres i the firſt sommer ſeason, thzoughe the brethe of the wynde zepherus that wexeth warme, & the cloudye wynde Auſter blowe felliythe, than gothe away fayrenesse of thornes. Eft the see is clere and cauline with moning floodes, & ofte the horrible wynde Aquilon moueth boiling tempestes and ouerwhelueth the see. If the forme of this worlde is so feld stable, & if it turneth by so many enterchaunges: wylt thou than truſten in the tombling fortunes of men? wylt thou trowen on flytyng goodes? It is certayn and eſtabliſhed by lawe perdurable, that nothyng that is engendred is stedfast ne stable.

Cum ego, vera inquā, cōmemoras o virtutū cunctrix: nec inficiari poſſū proſperitatis mee beliſſimū curſum. Sed hoc eſt, quod. ac.

Than ſaid I thus: O norrye of al vertues, thou sayst sul sothe I may not forsake the riȝt swifte course of my prosperyte, that is to sayne, that the prosperyte ne be comen to me wonder swyftelye and soone. But thys is a thynge that greatly smarteth me, whan it remembreth me. For in al aduerſyties of fortune the moſte vnſely kynde of contrarious fortune is to haue ben weleful. P. But that thou abreſt thus (qō he) the turment of thy falſe opinion, that mayſt thou not ryghtfully blamen ne atretten to thynges, as who sayth, that thou haſte yet manye habundaunces of thynges. Tertus. For al be it so that the noble name of auēturous welefulneſſe moneth the nowe, it is lefull that thou reken with me, of how many thynges thou haſt yet plentie. And therfore if that thilke thing that thou haddeſt for more pricious in al thy trebelle of fortune be kept to the yet by ꝑ grace of god vnwēmed & vndefouled: mayſt thou than playne ryghtfully vpon the miſchef of fortune, syther thou haſt yet thy beſt thynges? Certes yet lyueth in good porne thilke precious honour of mānkynde Symachus thy wyues father, whiche that is a man made of all sapyence & vertue, the which mā thou wouldeſt bie with ꝑ perte of thyn owne lyfe, he bewayleth the wronges that men doone to the, and not for hym ſelfe. For he lyueth in sykerneſſe of any fortune put ayenſt hym. And yet lyueth thy wyfe, thilke attempre of witte, and paſſyng other women in clenneſſe of chaſtite. And for I wolde shewen shortly her vertues, she is lyke her fathers. I tel the, that she lyueth lothe of this life and hateth to the onely her goodes, and is al mate and ouercome by weping & sorowe for desire of the. In the which thing only I more greauen the, that thy wyfulneſſe is amenuſed. What shal I sayn eke of the two sones cousaylours, of whiche as of children of her age there shyneth the lykeneſſe of the witte of her father & of her eldē father? And syther the souerayn cure of al mortal folke is to sauen her owne lyues, if thou knowe thy ſelfe, thy goodes make the more weleful. For yet ben there thynges dwelled to the warde, ꝑ no man douteth ꝑ they ne ben more derewortheto ꝑ thā thyn owne lyfe. And for thy due teeres, for yet is not euery fortune hateful to the ward: ne ouer great tempeſt ne hathe not yet fallen vpon the, whan thyn aueres cleuen faſte: that neither wol ſuffren ꝑ comforte of thys tyme preſēt, ne the hope of tyme coming to paſſen ne to faylen vs. And I pray (qō I) that faſte more they holden: for the whyles that they holden, how so euer that thynges ben, I shal weltteren forthe and escapen. But thou mayſte wel

wel frue bowe great apparayles & aray, that me lacked that be passed awaye from me. ℙ. I haue somewhat auaunced & furthered the (qꝺ̄ she) if that thou anoy not or forthinke not of al thy fortune, as who sayethe, I haue somwhat comforted the, so that thou tempest not the thus with al thy fortune, sythen thou hast yet thy best thynges. But I maye not suffren thy delyces, that playnest so wepynge and anguishous, for that there lacketh somwhat to thy welefulnesse. For what man is he that is so sad or of great parfyte welfulnesse, that he ne stryueth & playneth on some halfe ayen the qualite of his estate: for why ful anguishous thing is the condicion of mannes goodes. For either it cometh nat al togyther to a wight, or els it ne lasteth not perpetuell. For some man hath great rychesse, but he is ashamed of his vngentyl lynage. And some man is renomed of nobilesse of kynred, but he is enclosed in so great angwisshe of nede of thynges, that hym were lauer that he were vnknow. And some man habounderh both in richesse & nobilesse, but yet he bewaylerh his chaste lyfe, for he ne hath no wyfe. And some manis, & seruy maryed, but he hath ne children, and nourisshyth his richesses to straunge folke. And some man is gladed with childre, but he wepeth ful ofte for ꝑ trespace of his sone or of his doughter. And for this ther ne acorderh no wight lightly for condicion of his fortune, for al day to euery man there is in somwhat ꝑ displaseth, be ne wot nought, or els he byderh ꝑ he hath assayed. And adde this also ꝑ euery welefull man hath a ful delycate feling: so that but if al thynges befallen at his owne wyl, he is impacient, or is not vsed to haue non aduersite, anone he is thrown aboute for euery lyteil thynge. And ful lyteil thynges ben tho, that withdrawen the somme or the perfection of blysfulnesse fro hem that ben moste fortunate. Howe many men trowest thou wolde demen hem selfe to ben almoste in heuen, yf they myghten attayne to the leste partie of the remnaunt of thy fortune? This same place that thou cleapest exile, is countrey to hem that enhabyten here. And for thy nott ynge wrecched, but whan thou wenest it, as who sayethe: Thou thy selfe ne no wyght elles nys a wrecch, but whan he weneth hym selfe he is a wrecch by reputacion of his corage. And auenwarde: All fortune is blysfull to a man, by the agreablite, or by the egalite of hym that suffreth it. What man is that, that is so welefull, that nolde chaungen hys estate whan he hath lost hys patience? The swetnesse of mānes welefulnesse is spraynte with many bytternesses. The whyche welefulnesse, although it seme swete and ioyfull to hym that vseth it, yet maye it not ben withholden, that it ne gothe awaye whan it wolle.

Then it is well sene, howe wrecched is the blysfulnesse of mortall thynges, that neyther it dureth perpetuel wyth hem, that euery fortune receyuen agreablye or egally, ne it deliuereth nat in all to hem that ben anguyshous.

O ye mortal folke, what seke ye than blysfulnesse out of your owne selfe: whiche is purely in youre selfe? Errour and folye confoundeth you. I shal shewe the shortely the poynte of souerayne blysfulnesse.

Is there any thynge to the more precious than thy lyfe? Thou wylte answere nay.

Than, if it so be that thou art myghty ouer thy selfe, that is to sayue, by tranquyllyte of thy soule, than hast thou thynges in thy possession that thou nolderst neuer leten: for fortune maye not bynemme it the. And that thou maiste knowe that blysfulnesse ne maye not stande in thynges that ben fortunous and temporel, nowe understande and gather it togyther thus. If blysfulnesse be the soueraygne good of nature that lyueth by reason, the lac thynge is not soueraygne good that may be taken awaye in any wyse. For more worthy thyng is and more digne than thynge, that may not be taken awaye. Than sheweth it well, that the vnstablenesse of fortune maye nat attayne to receyue suche blysfulnesse. And yet more ouer what man that thys tombelynge welefulnesse leadeth, eyther he wote that it is chaungeable, or els he wot it not. And yf he wote it not, what blysfull fortune maye there ben in the blyndenesse of ignoraunce? And yf he wote that it is chaungeable, he more alwaye ben a drabbe, that he ne lese that thynge, that he ne douteth not but that he may leten it. As who sayethe, he more alwaye be agast, lest he lese that, that he weneth right wel he maye lese. For whiche the contynuel drede that he hath, ne suffreth hym not to be welefull. Or els yf he lese it, he weneth to be despysed and forleten. Certes she that is a ful lyteil good, that is borne wythouten herte whanne it is lost, that is to sayue, that men ben no more sore of the lost than

of the

of the hauynge. And for as muche as thou thy selfe arte he, to whom it hath be shewed and preued by ful many demonstracions, as I wote wel, that the soules of men ne mowen not dyen in no wyse. And eke sens it is clere & certayne, that fortunous welefulnesse endeth by the deth of the body: it may not be doubted, that yf dethe may take awaye blisfulnesse, that all the kynde of mortall thynge ne discendeth in to wretchednesse by the ende of dethe. And sythen we knowe wel, that many a man hathe sought the fruite of blisfulnesse, not onely with suffering of deth, but eke with suffrynge of paynes & turmētes: howe myght in this present lyfe make mē blisful, sins that thilke selfe lyfe ended, it ne maketh folke no wrecches.

¶ Quisquis volet perennem
Cautus ponere sedem.
Stabilisq; nec sonori
Sterni turbus Euri,
Et turbidus minantem.
Curas spernere ponti,
Montis cacumen alti,
Nubilas vitet arenas. &c.

What maner of folke, ware and stable that will founden hem a parduable seete, and ne wyll not be cast down with the loude blastes of the winde Eurus, & wyll dispyse & see menasyng with stoobes: Lete hym eschewe to bilden on the coppe of the mountaygne, or in the moyste sandes.
For yf the wilde Eurus turmēteth & coppe of the mountaygnes with all her strengthes, and the lose sandes refuseth to beare the heauy weightes. And for thy yf thou wolte eschewe the perylous aucuture, that is to save, of the world chaunce wynde certaynly to set thyn house of a mery seete in a lowe stone.

For although the wynde troublyng the see, thonder with ouer throwynge, thou that arte put in quiete and welefyl, by strēgth of thy paleys, shalt leade a clere age, forbynge the woodnesse and the yres of thayre.

Sed quoniam racionum iam in te meatū fomenta discendunt, paulo validioribus vtendum puto. Age enim. Si tam caduca ac momentaria fortune. &c.

But for as muche as the norysshynges of my reason discenden now vnto the, I trowe it were tyme to vsen a lyttel stronger metieres. Now [illegible] that they yeftes of fortune ne were not buttell ne transytorye. What is there in hem that may be thynge to any man? Or els that it were foule, yf that it were considered perfytely. Wyche is there that is not vicious by the nature of them selfe, or elles by the nature of ther [illegible]. What is more worthe of wyche selfe? Is it not golde or myght of money assembled? Certes that golde and that money shyneth & yeueth better renomme to them that dispenden it, than to thilke folke that more keten it: for auarice maketh alwaye wicked tresors, to ben hated, and largesse maketh folke cleere of renomme. For [illegible] gras as ben transfered from one maye to another maye not dwell with no man. Ne tresors ther is that money possessed [illegible] transflared in to other folke, and [illegible] hadde by vsage of large [illegible] hath veuemt. And a forthy [illegible] is ouer al in all worlde, [illegible] one man, it shoulde make all [illegible] nedy as of that. And certes a [illegible] that is to saye wythout a [illegible] teth togethers the herynge of [illegible] wyche they ben apayed, [illegible] poore, that forgone the [illegible]

Ryche and nedy depe I [illegible] tens yf many folke ne may not [illegible] al ne may it not comen to one man without powerne of al other folke. And the [illegible] gēmes yf I call precyous stones, drauen [illegible] the eyen of folke to hemward. Thanne [illegible] for the beaute. But certes yf ther were beaute or bounte in thynge of stones, thilke [illegible] neesse is of the stones hem selfe, & not of men. For wyche I wonder greatly, that men [illegible] meyen on suche thynges. For why, what thynge is it, that yt ne wanteth moeuyng and [illegible] crature of soule and body, that by right myght semen a layte creature to him that hath a soule of

le of reason. For al be it so, that gemes drawen to hem self a lyght of the false beaute of the worlde, thorow the cure of her creatour and the distinction of hem self, yet for as mikel as they ben putte under your excellence, they ne haue nat deserued by no way, that ye shulde marueylen on hem. And the beaute of feldes delyteth it not myssel vnto you.

B. Why shulde it not delyten vs, sythe that it is a right fayre porcyoun of the right fayre werke, that is to sayne, of thys worlde. And right so ben we gladed sometyme of the face of the see, whan it is clere: And also marueylen we on the heuen and on the sterres, and on the sone and on the moone. Phi. Aperrayneth (qð she) any of thilke thinges to the. Why darest thou glorifie the in the shynynge of any suche thynges. Art thou distingued and embelyssed by the springyng floures of the fruit somer season. Or swelleth thy plentie in fruites of somer. Why arte thou rauyshed with ydel ioyes. Why embracest thou straunge goodes, as they were thyne. Fortune ne shal neuer make, that suche thynges ben thyne, that nature of thynges hath maked forayne fro the. Sothe it is, that without doute the fruites of the erthe owen to be to the nourysshynge of beestes. And yf thou wolte fulfyll the nede after that it suffiseth to nature, than is it no nede that thou seke after ỳ superfluite of fortune. For with ful fewe thynges and with ful litel thinges nature hath ben apayd. And if thou wolte acholen the fulfyllynge of nature vn superfluities: certes thylke thynges that thou wolte threwen or powren in to nature, shullen ben vnioyfull to the or elis anoyous. Wenest thou eke, that it be a fayre thynge to shyne with dyuers clothynges. Of whiche clothyng, if the beaute be agreable to loken vpon, I woll marueylen on the nature of the matere of thylke clothes, or elis on the worke man that wrought hem. Do the also a longe route of meyne make the a blyssfull man. the whiche seruauntes yf they ben vicious of condicions, it is a great charge and distruccion to the house and a great enemye to the lord hym self. And if they ben good men, howe shal straunge a forayn goodnes be put in the nõbre of thy richesses. So ỳ by al these forsayd thynges it is clerely shewed, ỳ neuer one of thylke thinges ỳ thou acomptedest for thy goodes, nas not thy good. In which thinges, if there be no beaute to be desyred, why shuldest thou be sorie to lese the. or why shuldest thou reioyse the to hold hem. For yf they ben fayre of their owne kynde, what aperrayneth ỳ to the. For also wel shulden they haue ben fayre by them self, though they were departed from al thy richesses. For why, fayre ne precious wer they not for that they comen amõg thy richesses. But for they semed fayre and precious, therfore shaddest leuer reken hem amonges thy richesses. But what desyrest thou of fortune wyth so great afaire. I trowe thou sekest to dryue awaye nede wyth haboũdaũce of thinges, but certes it turneth you al into the cõtrary. For why, certes it needeth of full many helpynges to kepen the dyuersite of precious hostilementes. And sothe it is, that of many thynges they haue nede, ỳ many thynges haue. And ayen warde, of lytel thing needeth him that measureth his ful after the nede of kynde, and not after thourrage of couetise. It is so then, that ye men haue no propre good set in you, for such ye moté seke outwarde in forayn and subiect thiges. So is than the condicion of thinges turned vp so downe, that a man that is a diuine beest, by merite of his reason, thiketh that him self nys neither fayre ne noble, but yf it be through possession of hostilimẽtes, that ne han no soules, and certes al other thynges ben apayde of her owne beauties: But ye men ỳ be semblable to god by your resonable thought, desiren to apaye ten your excellẽt kynde of the lowest thinges. Ne ye vnderstanden not howe great a vrõge is don to your creatour. For he wold ỳ mankinde wer most worthy and noble of any erthly thing: and ye thresten do vne your dignities byneth ỳ lowest thynges. For yf that al the good of euery thynge be more precious, than is thylke thyng, whose that the goodis, sythe ye demen that the foulest thynges ben your goodesse: than submitten ye and putte youre selues vnder the foulest thynges by your estimatiõ. And certes this betydeth not without your desserte. For certes suche is the condicio of al mankynde, that onely when it hath knowynge of it selfe, than passeth it in nõblesse al other thynges. And whan it forleteth the knowynge of it selfe, than it is brought bene then al beestes. For why, all other lyuynge beestis han of kinde to knowen not hem selfe. But whan that men leten ỳ knowynge of hem selfe it cometh hem of vyce. But howe blode shweth the errour and the folye of you men

that

that wenen that any thyng may ben apaerl-
led with straunge apparelmétes: but forsoth
that may not be done. For if a wight thyneth
with thynges that beue put to hym: Is thus.
If thilke thynges thynen with, whiche a man
is apparelled: Certes thilke thynges ben cō-
mended and praised, with whiche he is appa-
relled: but natheleſſe, thynge that is couered
and wrapped vnder ỳ, dwelleth in his fylth.
And I deny that thilke thynge be good, that
anoyeth him that hath it. Gabbe I of thys?
Thou wolte saye nay. Certes tycheſſes haue
anoyed ful ofte hem, ỳ han had tho tycheſſe.
sithe that euery wycked shrewe is for his wic-
kednesſe the more gredy after other folkes ri-
cheſſes, where so euer it be in any place, be it
golde or precious stones, and weneth him on-
ly moſt worthy that hath hem. Thou than
that so besy diedeſt nowe the swerde and the
speare, yf thou haddeſt entred in the paths of
this lyfe anoyde warfaryng man, than wol-
deſt thou synge before ỳ theefe, as who saith
apore man that heareth no tycheſſe on him by
the way, may boldly syng before theues, for
he hath not wherof to be robbed. O precious
and right clere is the blyſſulnes of mortal ri-
cheſſes, that whan thou haſe got en it, than
haſt thou lorne thy ſekernesſe.

Felix nimium prior etas, Contenta fideli-
bus armis, Necdum erat pernicialis auri: Facilique
victa solebat Ieiunia soluere glande, Nec bac
vina merum norat Liquido confundere melle,
Nec lucida vellera serum ac.

BLyſful was the firſt age of men,
they helden hem apayde with the
metes ỳ the trewe feldes brough
ten forth, they ne dyſtroyed nor
diſceyued nat hem ſelfe wythout
cage, they weren wont lyghtly to ſlaken her
hunger at euyn with akehownes of okes, they
ne coude nat medel the yefte of Baccus to the
clere homy, that is to sayne, they couthe make
ne piement or clarre: Ne they coude nat me-
del the bright fleeces of the coūtre of Serres
with the venym of Tiry, this is to sayn, they
coude nat dyen white fleces of Syrien coūtre
with the blode of a maner ſhelfyſhe, that men
finden in Tyre, with whiche blode men dyen
purple. They ſlepten holſome ſlepes vpon the
graſſe, and dronken of the rennynge waters,
and lyen vnder the shadowes of the hye pyne
trees. Ne no geſte or straunger ne came yet
the hye ſee with oores or with shippes, ne they
ne habben seyn yet no newe stronges to leden
marchandiſe into diuerſe countrees. Tho we-
ren the cruel clarions ful huſt and ful ſtyl.
Ne blody had by egre hate, ne had beten yet
armures. For where to or whiche woodnesſe
of enemyes wolde firſt meuen armes, whan
they sawen cruel woundes ne none medes be
of blode yshad? I wolde ỳ our tymes sholde
turne aven to tholde maners. But ỳ anguiſh-
ous loue of hauing in folke burneth more cru-
elly than ỳ mountain of Ethna ỳ ay brenneth.
Alas, what was he that firſt dalfe vp ỳ gol-
bettes or ỳ weyghtes of golde, couerd vnder
erthe, & the precious stones ỳ wolden bene be-
hydde? He dalfe vp precious perils, that is to
sayn, that he ỳ hem firſt vp dalfe, he dalfe vp
a precious peryl, for why for the precious-
nes of ſuch thyng hath many man ben in peryl.

Quid autem de dignitatibus, potestatibus
di feram, quas vos, vere dignitates ac potesta-
tes inſul, celo erectiores? Quas ſi quis pri-
ſtinum quemq; recolerem ac.

BVt what ſhall I ſpeke of dignitees
and powers, the which ye wenden
they ther hadden ben dignitees or
ry powers, ye ſen hem as brighe as
the heuen? the whiche dygnitees and powers,
yf they comen to any wicked man, ther doth
great domages and diſtructions, as doth the
flambe of the mountayne Ethna, whan the
flambe walowen vp, ne no delite ne doeth
ſo cruell harmes. Certes ye remembre well
(as I trowe ỳ thilke dygnyte that me clepe
the imperye of counſaylours, the whiche wis-
dom was begynnyng & cheef of freedom, your elders
conyered to haue bene aware that dygnyte
for the pryde of the counſaylours. And right
for that ſame youre elders before that tyme
had done aware oute of the eyre of Rome the
kynges name, that is to ſayne, they nold haue
no lenger no kynge. But nowe we, yf so be that
dignitees and powers bene yeuen to good
men, the whiche thyng is ful ſelde, what agree-
able thynges is there in the dignitees and po-
wers, but only the goodneſſe of folke that v-
ſen hem? And therfore is it thus, that honour

cometh not to vertue bycause of dignite: and ayenwarde, honoure commeth of dignite for cause of vertue. But whiche is thilke youre dere worth power that is so clere & so requyrable? O ye erthlye beestes, consyder ye not ouer whych thing that it semeth that ye haue power? Howe yf thou saue a mouse amonge other myce, that chalenged to hym selfwarde right & power ouer al other myce, how great scorne wolde it thou haue of it? Glosa. So fareth it by men, the body hath power ouer ꝑ body: for if thou loke wel vpon the body of a wight, what thing shalt thou finde more freel than is mankynde: the whiche men full ofte be slayne by flying of flyes, or els with entryng or crepyng wormes in to the priuytees of mānes body. But where shall men fynden any man that may exercysen or haunten any right vpon an other man, but onely on hys body, or els vpon thinges that ben louer than the body, the whiche I clepe fortunes possessyons? Hast thou haue euer any cōmaundemente ouer a free corage? Hayste thou remeue fro the estate of his propre rest, a thought that is cleuing togyder in him selfe by stedfast reioure? Is whylom a tyraunt wende to confounde a free man of corage, the wende to constraine hym by tourmentes, to maken him discouerē and accusen folke, that wysten of a coniuracyon, whyche I clepe a confederacy that was cast ayenst this tyraunt: but this freman bote of his owne tonge, and caste it in the vysage of thylke woode tyraunt. So that the turmētes that thys woode tyraunt wende to haue made mater of cruelte, this wise man made it mater of vertue. But what thynge is it that a man maye do to an other man, that he ne maye receyuen the same thynge of other folke in him selfe? Or thus: What may a man done to folke, that folke ne maye done to him the same? I haue herde telde of Busirides that was wonte to sleen hys gestes, that herbrodē in his house: and he was slayne hym selfe by Hercules that was his geste. Regulus had taken in batayle manye men of Affryke, and caste hem into fetters: but sone after he must yeuen his handes to be bounde with the chaynes of hem that he had whylom ouercomen. Wenest thou thā, that he be mighty that hath power to doone a thyng, that other ne maye done in him ꝑ he hath in other? And yet more ouer, if so were ꝑ these dignytes or powers hadde any propre or naturel goodnes in hem, neuer nolde they comen to shrewes. For cōtrayous thinges ne ben wōt to ben yfelowshipped togythers. Nature refuseth that contrayous thynges ben ioyned. And so as I am in certayne that wicked folke haue dignitees ofte tyme, than sheweth it wel that dignytees & powers ne ben not good of her owne kynde, sens that they suffren hem selfe to cleauen or ioynen hem selfe to shrewes. And certayne the same thyng may I most dignely iudgen and sayne of all the yeftes of fortune, that moste plenteously comen to shrewes, of whych yeftes I trow it ought be consydred that no mā douteth that he is stronge, in whome he seeth strength: and in whome swyftnesse is, forthi is that he is swyfte. Also musyke maketh musyciens, and physike maketh physyciens, and rethorike eke rethoriciēs. For why, ꝑ nature of euery thynge maketh hys propertye, ne it is not entremedled with the effecte of contrayous thynges But certes ryches ne may not restrayne auarice vnstanched. Ne power ne maketh nat a man mightye ouer him selfe, which that vycious lustes holden dystrayned with chaynes that ne mowen not be vnbounden. And dignitees, that be yeuen to shrewde folke, not onely ne maketh hem not digne, but sheweth rather all openly, that they bene vnworthy & indigne And it is thus. For certes ye haue ioye to cleape thynges wyth false names, that beaten hem in all the countreye, the whych names ben ful ofte reproued by the effecte of the same thynges. So that these vile ryches ne oughte not by ryght to be cleped riches, ne suche power ne oughte not to be cleped power, ne such dignite ne oughte not to be cleped dignyte. And at laste I haue conclude the same thynge of all the yeftes of fortune: In whiche there nys nothinge to be desyred, ne that hath in him selfe naturel bōnte, as it is wel ysene, for neither they ioynen hem not alway to good men, ne maken hem alway good, to whom they ben ioyned.

Nouimus, qui tras dederit ruinas
Urbe fu mata, patribusq; cesis,
Fratre qui quondam ferus interēpto
matris effuso maduit cruore.
Corpus et vltu gelidum peremptum,
Ora non tinxit lachrymis: sed esse,
Cēsor extinctī potuit decoris. &c.

We haue well knowen, howe manye great harmes and distructiõs were doone by thempertour Nero. he lete brennen the cyte of Rome, & made slee the senatours, & he cruel whylom slough his brother. And he was made moyste with the blode of his mother, that is to saye, he let sleen & ryften the wombe of hys mother, to sene where he was conceyued, & he loked on euery halue of her deed cold body, ne no terre wette his face, but he was so harde herted þ̃ he myght be domes man or iudge of her deed beautie. And natheles yet gouerned this Nero by ceptre al the people þ̃ Phebus may sen comyng fro his vtterest arising, til he hyd his beames vnder the wawes, that is to sayne, he gouerned al the peoples by ceptre imperyal, þ̃ the sonne goth aboute fro Eest to West. And eke this Nero gouerned by ceptre al the peoples that be vnder the colde sterres, that righten the Septentrions, that is to sayne, he gouerned al the peoples that be vnder the party of the North. And eke Nero gouerned all the peoples that the violent wynde Eothus shoteth and baketh the brennyng sandes by hys hye heate, þ̃ is to say, al þ̃ peoples in þ̃ southe. But yet ne might nat al his power tourne the woodnesse of this wycked Nero. Alas it is a greuous fortune, as ofte as a wicked swerde is yoyned to cruel venym, that is to saye, venemous cruelte to lordshyppe.

Cum ego. Scis inquam ipsa, minimum nobis ambitionem mortalium rerum fuisse dominatam. Sed materiam gerendis rebus optauimus, quo ne virtus cassa esset. Et illa. Atqui hoc vnum est ac.

Thã said I thus. Thou woost wel thy selfe, that the couetise of mortal thynges ne hadden neuer lordshyp in me. But I haue well desyred matter of thynges to don, as who saith, I desyre to haue mater of gouernaunces of oper comynalties, for vertue styl shulde not ellen: that is to sayne, that selde or that he were olde, hys vertue that laye nowe stylle, he shulde not perysshe vnexercysed in gouernaunce of comune: for whyche men myght speken or wryten of hys good gouernement. Phi.

Forsothe quod he and that is a thyng that may drawen to gouernaunce suche herres as ben worthy & noble of her nature: but natheles it may nat drawen or retorn suche herres as ben y brought to the ful perfection of vertue, that is to sayne couetise of glorie and renome, & haue wel admitted the comune thynges, or doone good deseses to pryte of the comune. For he nolde and contrer, how clere and how be bolde of al pryse is the like glorie. Certayne thynges is as thus halfe ferned by the demonstracion of Astronomie, that al the enuyronnyng of the erthe aboute, ne halue but the reason of a pricke, at the regarde of the greatnesse of the heauen, that is to sayne, that if there were made a proporcion of the erthely greatnesse of heuen to hys iudgen in all that ne helde no space. Of the whiche lytel regyon of this world, the fourth part of the erthe is inhabited with knowen beestes that we knowen, as thou hast ofte herd. ferned by Ptholome that proueth it.

And if thou hadest withdrawen and abated in thy thought or the fourthe parte, as muche space as the se and y mareys couereth and ouergoeth, as muche space as the regyon of drought ouerstrecheth, that is to sayne, lesses and deseses, yet shulde there dwelle a right lytel place to habitacion of men. And yet that be enuyronned and fed with the lytle pryce of the erthe, ye kenne ye manifestliche, publysshen your name, and done your name forth beren. But your glory thanne is to narowe, that is to sayne, thy ryngen is to lytel bounded, how canst thou it to large and to grete bere. And also ferre there, that many nacions of maners of tonge and of manere, and eke of habyte of the like nayture, the which nacions ben forbyden by cause of wawes, and other for dyuersyte of langage, and other for defaute of vsage, and entrecommunyng of marchandyse, not only the names of singuler men may not stretchen, but eke the fame of cytees may not stretchen. At the last, seyde the tyme of Marcus Tullius as him selfe wryteth in a boke, þ̃ the renome of the comune of Rome ne had not yet passed the mountayne Caucasus, & yet was Rome well waxen and redoubted of the Parthes, and eke of other folke. Se ye abyteng aboute. Seest thou not than howe streyte and howe compressed is this glorie that ye trauaylen, aboute to shewen and to multeplye? Haue

than the glory of a synguler Romayne stretcheth thyder as the fame of the name of Rome maye not clymben ne passen. And eke seest thou not that the maners of dyuers folke and her lawes ben discordant amonges hem self, so that thylke thyng that some men iuge worthy of prayseng, other folke iudgen that, that is worthy of tourment. And herof cometh it that though a man delyteth hym in prayseng of his renome, he may not in no wyse bryngé forthe ne spreden hys name to manye maner peoples, and therfore euery man oughte to be apayde of hys glory þ is publysshed amonge hys owne neyghbours, and thylke noble renome shall be restrayned within the boundes of the maner folke. But howe manye a man that was ful noble in his tyme, hath þ wretches and nedy forsetyng of wryters put oute of mynde and don away, all be it so þ certes thylke thynges profyten lytell, the which thinges and wrytinges long and derke elde do away both hem and eke her auctours. But ye semen semé to getten you a perdurablite whā ye thynken in tyme comynge youre fame shall lasten. But natheless, yf thou wylte make comparison to the endeles spaces of eternite. What thing haste thou, by which thou mayst reioysen the of longe lastynge of thy name? For if there were made comparyson of the abydyng, of a momente to ten thoutande wynter, for as moche as bothe the spaces ben ended, for yet hath the momente some porcyó of it, al though it be lytell. But natheless thylke selfe nombre of yeres, and eke as many yeres as therto may be multyplied, ne may not certes be comparisoned to the perdurablite that is endeles. For of thynges whiche that haue ende maye be made comparison, but of thynges whiche that ben withouten ende, to thynges that haue ende may be maked no comparyson. And for thy is it that although renome as of longe tyme as euer the lyste to thynken, were thought, to þ regard of the eternite that is vnstaunchéable and infynite, it ne shoulde not only seme lytel, but plainly right nought. But ye semen certes ye can do nothing a right but if it be for the audience of the people, and for yle rumours. And ye forsaken the great worthynesse of conscience and of vertue, and ye seken your guerdons of the smale wordes of straunge folke. Haue nowe here and vnderstande in the lyghtnesse of suche pride and veine glory, howe a man showeth festynally and merely suche vanyte. Whylom there was a man that had assayed with stryuynge wordes an other mā, the which not for vsage of very vertue, but for proude vayne glorye, had taken vpon him falsely þ name of a philosophre. This rather man that I spake of, thought he wold assay, whether he thilke were a philosophre or no, that is to saye, yf that he wolde haue suffred lightly, in pacyence, the wronges that were done to him. This fained philosophre toke patience a lytell whyle: and whan he had receyued wordes of outrage, be as in stryuinge ayen a reioysyng of hym selfe, sayde at laste thus. Understandest thou not, that I am a philosophre? That other man answerde againe bytingly and sayd: I had wel vnderstand it, if thou haddest holde thy tonge stil. But what is it to these noble worthy mé, for certes of suche folke speke I þ seken glory with vertue? What is it (qō he) what attyeneth fame to suche folke, whan the body is resolued by the deth at the last? for yf so be that men dyen in all, that is to say body and soule, the which thyng oure reason defendeth vs to byleue: than is there no glory in no wyse. For what shulde thylke glory be, whan he, of whom thylke glorie is sayde to be, nys right naught in no wyse. And yf the soule whyche that hath in it selfe science of good werkes, ba bounden from the prison of therthe, wendeth freely to the heuen, dispiseth it not than al erthly occupacion, and beynge in heuen reioyseth that it is exempte from all erthly thynges as who sayth the, than recketh the soule neuer of no glory of renome of this worlde.

Quicunqs solam mente precipiti petit,
Summumqs credit gloriam, Late patēs
Orbis cernat plagas, Irrumqs terrarū situ,
Breui repiete non valentis ambitum. &c.

Who so that wyth ouerthrowynge thought only seketh glory of fame, and weneth þ it be souerayne good, let him loken vpon the brode sprowynge countreys of the heuen, and vpon the straite scete of this erthe, and he shal be ashamed of thencreasse of his name, that may not fulfyll the lytel compas of the erthe. O what coueyten proude folke to lyfren vp her neckes in vayn in the deedly yoke of this worlde? for al though that renome spryad passyng toforn peoples

peoples, goth by dyuers tōges, and although great houses of kynredes shruen by clere ryches of honours, yet natheleſſe deth dyſpiſeth al high glory of fame, and deth wrappeth togethers the hygh heedes and the lowe, a makerth egal and euen the hyeſt with the lowest.

Where wōnen nowe the bones of trew Fabricius? What is nowe Brutus, or ſtrene Catone? The thynne fame yet lastyng of her ydle names, is marked with a fewe lettres. But although that we haue knowen the fayre wordes of y fame of hem, it is not yeuen to knowen hem that ben deed and cōſumpt. Legeth thā dyſtall vtterlye vnknowable, ne fame ne maketh you not knowe. And if ye wene to lyue the lenger for wynde of youre mortall name, whan one cruel day shal raueſthe youthanis the ſeconde dwellyng to you cloſe. The firſt deth he clepeth here the departing of ỹ body, and the ſeconde deth here the dyeyng of the renome of fame.

Sedne memorabile contra fortunam geretur bellum pugnes, eſt aliquando, cum de hominibus fallax illa non nihil bene mereatur: cum ſolicet cum ſe aperit. &c.

But for as moche as thou ſhalte not wenen qd the that I beare an vnmetable batayle a-yenſt fortune, yet ſomtyme it befalleth that the dyſſemuable deſeyueth to haue ryght good thāke of men: and that is whan ſhe her ſelf openeth, and whā ſhe diſcouereth her frōte, & ſheweth her maners. Peraduenture yet vnderſtādeſt ỹ not that I ſhal ſay. It is a wonder ỹ I deſire to tel, and therfore wherth may I vnplyte my ſentence with wordes. For I deme ỹ contrarious fortune profiteth more to men thā fortune debonayre. For alway whan fortune ſemeth debonayre, thā ſhe lieth falſely, bytheing the hope of welfulneſſe. But forſothe contrarious fortune is alwaye forthfaſte, whan ſhe sheweth her ſelfe inſtable through her chaungyng. The amiable fortune diſceyueth fōlke: the contrarye fortune teacheth. Thamyable fortune blyndeth with the beautie of her falſe goodes, the herres of folkes that vſen hem. The contrarye fortune vnbyndeth hem, with the knowyng of freele welefulneſſe. Thamyable fortune mayſte thou ſene alway wyndy and flowyng, & euer miſknowyng of her ſelf. The cōtrary fortune is attempre and reſtrayned and wyſe, thorowe the exercyſe of her aduerſyte. At the laſte amyable fortune with her flaterynges, drawyth myſwandryng men fro the ſouerayne good: the contrarious fortune leadeth ofte folke a-yen to ſothefaſte goodes, and halseth hem a-yen as wā lōke. Aſkeſt thou than that thou ought̄ to leren this a ſtreit thyng, that this aſpre and horrible fortune hath diſcouered to the, the thoughtes of thy trewe frendes? For why, this like fortune hath departed and vncouered to the both the certayne vyſages, and the the doutous viſages of thy felawes. Whā ſhe departeth away fro the, ſhe toke away her frendes and left the thy frendes. Nowe whan thou were riche and welefull, as the ſemed, with how many moldeſt thou haue bought the ful knowyng of thys, that is to ſayne, the knowyng of thy very frendes? Nowe playne ỹ not than of ỹ chaffe fortune, ſyth thou haſte founde the more precious kynd of tychaſſe, that is to ſayne, ỹ very frendes.

Quod mundus ſtabili fide. Concordibus vicibus. Quod pugnantia ſemina, foedus perpetuum teneant. &c.

That the world is ſtabliſſed with a faſt bayneth accordable chaunges of dayes, that the contrarying qualytees of elementes folden amonge hem ſelfe alyaunce perdurable, that phebus ỹ lyghtful day, that the moone hath commaunded to ouer the nyghtes: whyche nyghtes ſhal ouer the earth, that the ſee gredy to ſprengen with his goldē charyot bringeth forth ỹ ſtyll day, that the wynde Aurora hydeth the ſterres, whan ſhe chaſſeth the brydels, al thynges that nowe louen hem togyderes wolden make batayle cruwelly, & ryuen to fordone the fayre werke of this worlde, the which they nowe leden in accordable fayth, by fayre mouynges. This loue holdeth togyder peple ioyned with an holy bonde, & keyreth the ſeurement of marriage of chaſte loues. And ſo it enioyeth lawes to true felawes.

Cum

O wetyful wrecche mankynde if thilke loue that gouerneth the heué, gouerned your corages.

Here endeth the seconde boke, and here foloweth the thirde.

Iam cantum illa finierat, cum me audiendi auidum, stupentemq; attentis adhuc auribus carminis mulcedo detinerat. Itaq; paulo post, O inquam summum tutorū solamen animorum, quantum me. &c.

BY this she had ended her songe: whan the swetenesse of her dyte had thorugh perced me, ý was desyrous of herkenynge. And I astonyed had yet tyght mine eeres, that is to same, to herken the bet what she wold say, so that lytel here after I sayd thus. O thou ý art souerayne comfort of corages anguishous, so thou hast remounted and norisshed me with the weyght of thy sentences, and with delyte of syngyng, so that I trowe nor that I be vnperegall to the strokes of fortune: as who sayth, I dare wel now suffren al thassautes of fortune, and well defende me from her. And tho remedies, whiche that thou saydest here beforn, that weré right sharpe, not onelye that I am not agryslen of hem nowe, but I desyrous of hearynge, aske greatly to herken the remedyes. Than sayd she thus. That feled I well quod she whan that thou entreryste and styl, rauysshedest my wordes: and I abode tyll thou haddest suche habyte of thy thought, as thou hast nowe, or els tyl that I my self had maked it, to ý same habyte, whyche that is a more very thyng. And certes the remenaunt of thinges that ben yet to say ben suche, that first whan men taste hem, they bene bytynge: But whan they bene receiued within a wight, than ben they swete. But for thou saiest that thou art so desyrous to herken hem, with how great bréning wolldest thou glowen, if thou wystes whyder I wolde leden the? Whider is that qó I ýs. To thilke very blyssfulnesse qó she of whiche thyne herte dremeth. But for as much as thy sight is occupyed & dilourbed of erthly thinges, thou mayst not yet sene thylke selfe welefulnesse. B. Do quod I and shewe me what thylke very welfulnes is, I pray the without taryeng. P. That wol I gladly done (qó she) for cause of the. But I woll firste marken by wordes, & I wyll enforcen me to enforme the thilke false cause of blyssfulnesse, which ý thou moze knowest: so that whan thou haste beholden thylke false goodes, and turned thyn eyen so to that other syde, thou maye knowen the clerenesse of very blyssfulnesse.

Qui serere ingenuū volet agrum, Liberat arua prius fruticibus, falce rubos, sentemq; resecat. &c.

WHo so wol sowe a felde plenteous, let him firste delyuere it of thornes, and kerue a sonder with his hoke the, busshes and the ferne, so that ý corne maye cōmē heuy of eres and of grenes. Hony is the more swete if mouthes haue firste tasted sauours that be wycke. The sterres shinen more agreably, whan the wynde Nothus letteth his plungy blastes. And after that Lucifer the day sterre hath chased away the darke nyght, the day the fayrer leadeth the rosen horse of the sonne. And right so thou, beholdyng firste the false goodes begyn to withdraw the necke fro the erthly affections, and afterwardes the very goodes shullen entren into thy corage.

Tum defixo paululum vltu, et velut ebrii gustum sue mentis sedem recepta, sic exp. ý Omnis mortalium cura quā in tot artes studiorum labor exercet. &c.

WHo fastened she a lytel ý syght of her eié, & she withdrawe, right as it were en to ý drawte seete of her thought: and begā to speake right thus. All ý entres quod she of mortal folke, which ý trauailen hem in many maner studyes, gon certes by diuers wayes: but natheles they enforcen hem al to comen onely to thende of blyssfulnes. And blyssfulnes is suche a good, that who so hath gotten it, he ne maye ouer that thyng more desyre. And thys thyng forsoth is so souerayne good, that it cōteineth in hym selfe al maner of goodes, to the which good if there fayled any thyng, it myghte not ben souerayn good, for than were some good out of this souerayne good, that might be desyred.

ryed. Nowe is it clere and certayne, that blis fulnesse is a parfyte state, by the congregacion of al goodes, the whiche blissfulnesse as I haue sayd, al mortal folke enforcen hem to gette by diuers wayes. For why, ỳ coueityse of euery good is naturelly planted in the hertes of men: but the mis wandring errour, misleadeth hem vnto false goodes. Of the whiche men, some of hem wenen that soueryn good be to lyuen without nede of any thynge: And other men drinen, ỳ soueryne good be right digne of reuerence, and enforcen hem to be reuerenced amonge her neighbours by the honours that they haue goten. And some folke there ben that holden ỳ ryght hye power be soueryn good, and enforcen hem for to reigne, or els to loynen hem to hem that reignen. And it semeth to other folke, that noblesse of renome be the soueraine good, and hasten hem to getten hem glorious name by the artes of werre or of peace. And many folke mesureen and gessen, that soueryne good be ioye and gladnesse, and wenen that it be right likful thing to plungen in voluptuous delites. And there ben some folke, that entrechaungen the causes & the endes of these forsayde goodes: As they that desyren richesses to haue power and delytes, or els they desyre power for to haue money, or for cause of renome. For these thynges and suche other is turned all the entencion of desyrynges and werkes of men, as thus: Noblesse and fauoure of people, which that semeth to al men, as it semeth hem, a maner clernesse of renomme: and wyfe and children, that men desyren, for cause of delyt and mervaylle. But forsoth frendes ne shullen not be reknen amonge the goodes of fortune, but of vertue, for it is a ful holy matter thyng. Al these other thynges forsoth be taken for cause of power, or els for cause of delyte. Certes now am I redy to referren the goodes of the body, to these forsayd thinges aboven: For it semeth that strēgth and gretnesse of body yeuen power and worthynesse, and that beaute and fayrenesse yeuen glorye and renōme: and helth of body semeth to yeuen delyte. For al these thinges it semeth only that blyssfulnesse is desired: for why, thylke thyng that euery man desireth moste ouer all thynges, he demeth that it be soueryn good. But I haue defined, that blissfulnesse is soueraine good, for which euery wight demeth ỳ thilke estate that he desireth ouer al thinges, that it be blissfulnesse. Nowe hast thou than before thyn eyen almoste al ỳ purposed forme of the welefulnesse of mankynde, that is to sayne, richesse, honours, power, glorie and delites, the which delite only conforted he Epicurus, and iuged and established that delyte is the soueryne good: for as muche as all other thynges, as him thought, byreft awaye ioye and mirthe from the herte. But I retourne agayne to the studies of men, of which men the corage alway reherseth and seketh for soueryne good, al be it so that it be with a blered memorie, but be nere by which path, right as a dronken man nete nowe by which parte he may retourne home to his house. Me meth it than that folke foles and erren to enforcen hem to haue nede of nothing. Certes there is none other thyng, that may so muche performen by sufficiaunce, as an estate plenteous of al goodes, that ne hath nede of none other thyng, but that is sufficiaunt of him self to him self. And folwen suche folke right wel men, that thilke thynge ỳ is right good, that is eke right worthy of honor & reuerence. certes nay. For that thynge ne is not right worthy to be despised, that welnigh al the entencion of mortal folke trauaileth to gete. And power eke ought not to be rekened of goodes. Wherefore for the same reson that thilke thing that is moste worthy of thinges, be itholde and without despite, the same cleernesse of renomme, ought eke to be rekened. Certes ther may no man forsake that thinge that is right excellent and noble. Me semeth be right clere renomed. Certes it nedeth not to say, that blissfulnesse be ful of ioye, ne sadnesse ne sorowes, sens that it might hem thinketh folke seken to haue and to hem that may lyken hem. Certes these ben the thinges that men willen and desyren to gete and for this cause desiren they richesses, dignites, tronnes, glorie, and delites. For ther by wenen men to haue sufficiaunce, honour, power, renomme, and gladnesse. Than is it good, that men seken thus by so many diuers studies, in whyche desire it may not lightly be shewed, howe great is the strengthe of nature. For howe so men haue diuers sentences and desiryngs, algates men accorden all in louynge the ende of good.

Quantas rerum discrepet habenas Natura
Tum. poterit.

potens, quibus immensum, Legibus orbem
Prouida ferruet, Strungatq; ligans irresolu-
to, Singula nem, placet arguto, Fidelibus
lenis prouerte cantu. &c.

Clos quoqz o terrena animalia, tenui ſer
imagine, veſtrum tamen principium ſomnia-
tis. Verumqz illum beatitudinis finem, licet
minime perſpicaci. &c.

IT lyketh me to ſhewe by ſub-
tyl ſonge with ſlacke and deli-
table ſown of ſtrynges, howe
that nature mightely enclineth
& ſtyreth by the gouernement
of thynges, and by ſuche la-
we the purueyable keepeth the great worlde,
and howe the bondynge reſtraineth al thyn-
ges by a bonde that maye not be vnbounden.
Al be it ſo that the lyons of the countreye of
Pene beten the fayre chaynes, and taken mea
te of the handes of folke, that yeuen it hem,
and dreden her ſturdy maiſters, of whiche
they be wont to ſuffre beatynges, yf that her
horrible mouthes ben bledde, that is to ſayn,
of beeſtes deuoured: her corage of ire paſ-
ſeth that hath beyble & reuled repaireth ayen,
and they roten greuouſly, and remembren on
her nature, and ſlaken her neckes from her
chaynes vnbounde, and her maiſter firſte to
torne with bloody teth, aſſayeth yᵗ woode wra
thes of hem, that is to ſayne, they freeten her
maiſter. And the iangirynge birde that ſingeth
on the bye braunches, that is to ſayne, in the
wodde, and after is enclofed in a ſtraite cage
al though the pleyinge beſyneſſe of men yeue
hem hanyed drynkes, and large meates with
ſweete ſtudye: yet natheles if thilke bryde ſkip
pyng out of her ſtraite cage, ſeeth the agrea-
ble ſhadowes of yᵗ wodes, ſhe defouleth with
her feete her meate yſhadde, & ſeketh on mor-
nyng onely the woode, and twyteth deſiryng
the woode with her ſweete wiſe. The verde of
a tre that is haled adown by mighty ſtrēgth
boweth redily the croppe adowne: but if that
the hande that is bente let it gone agayne, a-
non the croppe loketh bpright to the heuen.
The ſonne Phebus that falleth at euen in the
weſtren wawes, returneth ayen eftſones his
carte by a priuy pathe there as it is wonte a-
riſe. Al thinges ſeke ayen to her proper courſe,
and all thynges reioyſen on her returnyng a-
gayne to her nature: ne none ordinaunce is
betaken to thynges, but that hath formed the
ende to the begynnynge, and hath made the
courſe it ſelfe ſtable, that it chaunge not fro
his proper kynde.

CErtes alſo ye mē yᵗ ben erthly
beeſtes dreamen alwaye your
begining, al though it be with
a thyn imaginacio, & by a ma-
ner thought, al be it nat clerely
ne perfectly, ye loke frō a ferre
to thilke very fyne of bliſſfulnes. And therfore
naturel entencion leadeth you to thilke very
good, but many maner errours miſtourneth
you therfro. Conſider now if yᵗ be thilke thin-
ges, by which a man weneth to get hi bliſſful-
neſſe if that he may comen to thilke ende yᵗ he
weneth to come to by nature. For if yᵗ money,
honours, or theſe other forſayd thinges bring
en men to ſuch a thing that no good ne fayle
them ne ſemeth to fayle: Certes than wold I
graūt that they be maked bliſſful by thynges
that they haue goten. But if ſo be that thilke
thinges ne inowē not perfourme that they be-
heten, and that there be defaute of many goo-
des, ſheweth it not than clerely yᵗ falſe beaute
of bliſſfulneſſe is knowen & atteynt in thilke
thiges. Firſt & forwarde thou thy ſelfe, that
haddeſt habundaunce of rycheſſe nat longe a-
gon, I aſke the yᵗ in thabundaunce of al thilk
ryches, if thou were neuer anguiſhous or ſo-
re in thy corage of any wronge or greuaūce,
that betyd the in any ſyde. B. Certes (qō I)
it ne remembreth me not, that euer I was ſo
fre of my thought, that I ne was alwaye in
anguiſſhe of ſomwhat. P. And was that not
(qō ſhe) for yᵗ the lacked ſomwhat that thou
noldeſt not haue lacked? Or elſe thou haddeſt
that thou noldeſt haue had? B. Right ſo it is
(qō I) P. Than deſireſt thou yᵗ preſence of yᵗ
one, and thabſence of that other? B. I graunt
wel (qō I) P. Forſothe qō ſhe than nedeth
ther ſomwhat that euery man deſireth. B. Ye
there nedeth qō I. P. Certes (qō ſhe) and he
that hath lacke or nede of aught, wys not me
nery way ſuffiſaūt to him ſelfe. B. Nay qō I
P. And thou qō ſhe in al the pleute of thy ry-
cheſſe haddeſt thilke lacke of ſuffyſaunce? B.
What elſ (qō I) P. Than may not riches ma
ken that a man nis nedy, ne that he be ſuffici-
ent to him ſelfe: and yet that was it that they
beheten as it ſemed. And eke certes I trowe
that

that this be gretly to cõsider, that mone hath not in his owne kynde, that it ne may ben bynomed of hem that haue it maugre hem. B. I knowe it wel (qõ I) P. Why shuldest ꝑ not beknowen it (qõ she) when euery day ꝑ strenger folke benomen it from the feble maugre hem? Fro whence come els al these forayn cõplaynes, quarels, or pledynges, but for that men aske her money that hath ben bynomed hem by strength or by gyle, & alwaye maugre hem? B. Right so it is (qõ I) P. Than hath a manne de (qõ she) to seken him forayn helpe, by which he may defend his money. B. Who may saye nay (qõ I) P. Certes (qõ she) and him nede de none helpe, if he ne had no money that he myght lese. B. That is doutes (qõ I) P. Than is this thyng turned in to ꝑ cõtrary (qõ she) for rychesse, that men wenen shulde make suffysaunce, they maken a man rather haue nede of forayn helpe. Whiche is the maner or the gyse (qõ she) that rychesse may dryue away nede? Riche folke may they neither bane honger ne thurste? These riche men may they fele no colde on their lines i wener? but thou wilt answere ꝑ ryche men haue ynough, wherwith they may slaúchen her hõger, and slaken her thurst, & done away colde. In this wyse may nede ben cõforted by rychesse, but certes nede ne maye not all utterly be done away. For yf this nede that alway is gapyng and gredy, be fulfylled wyth rychesse and any other thyng, yet dwelleth than a nede ꝑ mote be fulfylled, I holde me styl, and tel not how that lytel thing suffiseth to nature: but certes to auarice suffyseth not ynoughe of nothyng. For syn that rychesse ne may not al don away nede, and they maken they owne nede, what maye it than be, that ye wenen that rychesses mowen yeuen you suffysaunce?

Quamuis fluente dines auri gurgite, Non explebuntur cogat auarus opes. &c.

AL were it so, that a noble coueitous man hadde a ryuer or a gutter fletyng al of golde, yet shulde it neuer staunch his coueitise: and although he had this necke charged with precious stones of the reed see: And though he do ere his feldes pleteous with an hũdred oxen, neuer ne shal his tiring beestes forleten him while he lyueth, ne the lyght richesses ne shal not beaten him company when he is deed.

Sed dignitates honorabilem, reuerendũq; cui proueneriut, reddunt. Num bis ea est magistratibus, ut bremium mentibus virtutes inserant, vicia depellant? &c.

But dignities to whome they be comen, maken they him honorable and reuerent? Haue they not so great strength that they maye putte vertue in hertes of folkes ꝑ vsen the lordship of hem, or els may they ben away ꝑ vices. Certes they be not wont to ben away wickednes, but they be wont rather to shewe wicke dnesse. And therof cometh it that I haue right great disdayn, that dignities be yeuen to wicked men. For whiche thyng Catullus cleped a cõsul of Rome that highte Nonius postume of woche, as who sayth he cleped him a congregacion of vyces in his oth, as a postume is ful of corrupcyon: [illegible] Nonius set in a chaire of dignite. Certes thou not than, howe great vilenies dignities done to wicked men? certes vnto a wicked men shulde be the lasse sene, of hem were nomed of none honour. Certes thou the whiche mightest not be brought with as many perils as thou myghtest suffre, ꝑ thou wolde bear the magistrate with decrate: therfore sayne that for peryl that myght betyde the offrince of the kyng Theodorike, thou wolde not be felaw in gouernaunce with Decorate, whan thou sa'e that he had wicked chaunce of a ryeorous shrewe and of an accusour. Ne ye may not for such honours ligen hem heresie of reuerẽce, that I deme and held vnworthy to haue the lyke same honours. Shewe if thou sawe a man that were fulfylde of wisdom, certes thou ne myghtest not deme ꝑ he were vnworthy to ꝑ honour, or els to the wisedom of whiche he is fulfylled. B. [illegible] quod I [illegible] Certes (qõ she) dignities apertaynen propirly to vertue, and vertue transporteth dignite anon to thylke man, to whiche she her self is conioyned. And for as muche as honoures of people ne maye not make folke digne of honour, it is wel sene clerely ꝑ they ne haue no propre beaute of dignite. And yet men oughten take more hede in this: for if a wight be in so muche the more outcast, that he is dispised of moste folke, so as dignite ne maye not maken shrewes worthy of no reuerence, than maketh dignite shrewes rather dispised the prat

sed, the

sed, þ which thewes dignite thewerth to moche folke. And forsothe not vnpunished, that is to sayn, that thewes reuengen hem ayenwarde vpon dignities. For they yelden ayen to dignities as great guerdós, whan they disporten a defoulen dignities with her vilonye. And for as muche as thou now knowest, that thylke very reuerence we mayen nat comen by these shadowy transitorye dignities, understonde nowe this: that if a man had vsed and had many maner dignities of consuls a were peraventure comen amonge straunge nacions, shulde thilke honour maken hym worthipful and redouted of straunge folke? Certes if that honour of people were a naturel yefte to dignities, it ne might neuer cessen no wher amóg no maner folke to done hys office. Right as a fyre in euery countreyne kyndeth not to enchaufen a maken hote. But for as muche as for to ben honourable or reuerent, ne cometh not to folke of her proper strength of nature, but onely of the false opinion of folke, that is to sayne, that wenen þ dignities maken folke digne of honours: anone therfore whan they comen ther as folke ne knowé not thilke dignities, her honours vanishen away and that anon. But þ is amonge straunge folke mayst thou sayn. Ne amonges hem there they were borne, ne dured not thylke dignities alwaye. Certes the dignite of the pronostey of Rome was whylom a great power: nowe is it nothynge but an vyle name, and the rente of the senatorie a great charge. And if a wight whilom had the office to taken hede to the vitayles of the people, as of corne a of other thynges, he was holden amóges hem great. But what thyng is more now outcaste than thylke pronostrye? As I haue sayd a lytel here beforne, that thylke thyng þ hath no propre beaute of it selfe, receyueth somtyme pryce a chyrynge, and somtyme leseth it by thopinion of vsaunces. Now if that dignities than ne mowe not make folke digne of reuerence, a if that dignities were foule of her wyl, by þ fylthe of thewes. And yf dignities lesen her chyrynge by chaúgynge of tymes, a if they weren foule by estimacion of people, what is it that they han in hem self of beaute, þ ought to be desyred? as who sayth, none: than ne mowen they yeuen no beaute of dignite to none other.

Quamuis se trio superbus ostro Comet et niueis lapillis. &c.

ALbeit so, that þ proude Nero with al his wode lurynge, kidde him a apparelled him wh fayre purpure of Tyrie, a with white perles. Algates yet therof he hateful to al folk, þ is to sayn that al was he behated of al folkes, yet thys wicked Nero had great lorthyppe. And vale whilome to the reuerent Senatours the worthypful fraes of dignities. And worthypful fraes he clepeth here, for that Nero that was so wicked yafe the dignities.

Who wolde than resonable wenen, that blisfulnesse were in suche honours, as ben yeuen by vicious thewes.

Inbero regna, regnumq; familiaritas efficere potentem valent? Quidni. &c.

BVt reignes a familiarities of kinges, may they make a man to ben mighty? how els? whe his blisfulnesse dureth perpetually. But certes þ olde age of tyme passed, a eke of present tyme nowe, is ful of ensáples, how þ kynges haue chaúged in to wretchednesse, out of her wel fulnes. O, a noble thyng, and a clere thing is power, that nys not founden mighty to kepe it selfe. And yf that power of realmes be authour a maker of blisfulnesse, yf thylke power lacketh on any syde, amenuiseth it nat thilke blisfulnesse, and bringeth in wretchednesse? But yet al be it so, that the realmes of mánkinde stretchen brode, yet more there neden ben muche folke, ouer which that euery kyng ne hath no lordlyppe ne cómaundement. And certes vpon thylke syde that power falleth, whiche that maketh folke blisful. Right on þ same syde no power entreth vndermeth that maketh hem wretches. In thys maner than moten kynges haue more portyon of wretchednesse than of welefulnesse.

A tyraunt that was kynge of Cecile, that had assayd the peryl of hys estate, shewed by symilitude the bredes of realmes by gathnesse of a swerde, that honge ouer the heed of hys famylyer. What thynge is than this power, that may nat doun a wayue the vrynes of besynesse, ne eschewe the prickes of drede?

And certes yet wolden they lyuen in syker nesse, but they may e nat. And yet they gloryfyen hem in her power. Holdeth than that

that thilke mā be mighty, þ thou seest that he wolde done that he maye not done. And holdest thou than hym a myghty man, that hath enuyroned hys sydes with men of armes or sergeautes, & dredeth more hem that he maketh agast, than they dreden hym, and that is putte in the handes of hys seruaunes, for he wulde seme myghty. But of famylyers or seruauntes of kynges, why shulde I tell the any thyng, sithe that I my selfe haue shewed the, that realmes hem selfe ben ful of great feblesse. The whiche famylyers certes the royal power of kynges in hoole estate and in estate abated, ful often throweth adowne.

Nero constrayned Senecke hys famylyer and hys mayster, to chesen on what derthe he wolde dye. Antonius cōmaunded that knightes slowen with her swerdes Papinià his famylyer, whiche Papinyan hadde ben longe time ful myghty amonges hem of the courte. And yet certes they wolden both haue remoued her power. Of whiche two Senecke entreted hym to reuen to Nero his richesse, and also to haue gone in to solytarye exile. But whan the great weight, that is to sayn, of lordes power or of Fortune, draweth hem that shullen fall, neyther of hem ne myght do that he wolde. What thing is than thylke power, that though men haue it, yet they ben agaste, whan thou woldest haue it, thou natte not when. And yf thou woldest forleten it, thou mayst nat eschewen it. But whether such men ben frendes at nede, as ben counsayled by Fortune, and nat by vertue. Certes suche folke as wel ful Fortune maketh frēdes, cōtrarious Fortune maketh hem enemies. And what pestilence is more mighty for to anoy a wight, than a familyer enemye.

Quisquis volet esse potentem, Animos domet ille feroces: Nec victa libidine colla. &c.

Who so wol be mighty, he mote dauten his cruell corages, ne put nat hys necke ouercomen, vnder the foule tayne of lechery. For al be it so, that the lordshyppe stretche so ferre, that the countrey of Inde quaketh at thy cōmaundemētes, or at thy lawes. And that the last yle in the see, that hyght Tyle, be thrale to the: yet yf thou mayst nat putten away thy foule derke desyres, and dryuen out fro the, wrecched complayntes: Certes it nys no power that thou hast.

Gloria vero quā fallax sepe, quā turpis est. Unde non iniuria tragicus exclamat. O gloria gloria multibus mortalium nihil a limo tacta, nisi autium inflatio magna. &c.

But glorie, howe deceyuable a thyng is it often? For which thyng, not shamefully a tragedye, þ is to sayn a maker of dytees that highte tragedies, cried, & sayde. O glory glory, to be nought nothinge els to thousādes of folkes but a quellere of eares. For many haue ful great renome by the false opinion of the people.

And what thynge may ben thought foulere than suche prayseynge? For thylke folke that ben praysed falsly, they moten nedes haue shame of her prayseynges. And yf that folke haue getten hem thanke or prayseynge by ryght deserues: What thing hath thilke puple ydo or encreased to the conscience of wyse folke, that meseuren her good, nat by the rumour of the people, but by the sothefastnesse of conscience? And if it seme a fayre thynge to haue encreased and spradde his name, and folweth it, þ it is demed to ben a thynge [illegible] if it ne be yspradde and encreased [illegible] sayd a litel here before, that litle thinges ben many folkes, to whiche folke the renome of a manne maye nat comen. It befalleth, that he that thou weenest be glorious & renomed, semeth in the nest part of the erthe, to ben without glorye and without renome. And certes amōges these thynges I [illegible] nat that the pese and the grace of the people, nys neuer worthy to ben remembred, ne commeth of wyse iugemēt, ne is ferme perdurably. But nowe of this name of gentilesse what man is it that ne may wel sene howe vayne & howe dyuers it is? For if þ name of gentilesse be referred to renome & clerenesse of lynage, than is gentyl name but a foreyn thyng, þ is to say, to hem þ glorifyen hem of her lynage. For it semeth þ gentyles be a manere prayse, that cometh of þ deserues of auncestres. And if prayseynge maketh gentylnesse, than moten they nedes ben gentyl, that ben praysed. For whiche thyng it folweth, that if thou ne haue no gentylnesse of thy selfe, that is to sayne

prise, that cometh of thy desert. For ayne gentylesse ne maketh the nat gentyll. But certes if there be any good in gentylesse, I trowe it be al onely thys: that it semeth as that a maner necessite be imposed to gentylmen, for that they ne shulde nat outragen or forleauen fro the vertues of her noble kynred.

Omne hominum genus in terris Simili surgit ab hortu. Vnus enim rerum pater est, Vnus cuncta ministrat. &c.

AL the lynage of men, þ ben in erth bē sēblable of birth. One alone is father of thinges: one alone ministreth al thinges: he yaf to þ sun his beames: he yaf to þ moone her hornes: he yafe to men þ erth: he yafe the sterres to þ heuen: he closed with mēbres the soules that camen from hys hye seate. Than comen al mortall folke of nolde seed. Why norysen ye or bosten of your elders? For yf ye loke your beginning and god youre father author and your maker. Than nys there no forlyued wyght or ungentyll but yf he nourishe hys corage vnto vices, and forlete hys proper byrthe.

Quid autem de corporis voluptatibus loquar, quarum appetentia quidem plena est anxietatis. &c.

BVt what shal I sain of delices of body, of which delices þ desires ben ful of anguishes, & þ fulfillinges of hē bē ful of penaūce? how great sickenesses & how great sorowes vnsuffrable, right as a maner fruite of wickednes ben thilke delices wōne to bringen to þ bodies of folke þ vsē hem? of which delices I not what ioye may ben had of her mouynge. But thys wote I wel, that who so euer wol remembrē hym of hys lusures, he shal wel vnderstande, that the fines of delyces ben sorouful & sory. And yf thylke delices nowe make folke blysful, than by þ same cause moten these bestes ben cleped blysful. Of which bestes al the entencio hasteth to fulfyl her bodely volupte. And the gladnesse of wife and childrem bere an honest thing, but it hath ben sayd that it is ouer moche ayenst kynde, that chyldren haue ben founden tourmentours to her fathers, I not howe many. Of which childrem howe byting is euery cōdicion, it needeth not to tellen it the that hast er thys tyme assayed it, and art yet nowe anguishous. In this tyme apropue I the sentēce of my disciple Euripides, þ sayd, that he þ hath no children is wreteful by vnfortune.

Habet hoc voluptas omnis stimulis agit fructus: Apumq; par volantium vbi grata mella fuit: Fugit et nimis tenaci ferum vita corda morsu. &c.

EVery delyte hathe thys that it anguisheth hem with pyckes that ben in it. It resembleth to these stynge flyes that we clepen bees, that after that he hathe shedde hys agreable honeyes, he flyeth away, and stingeth the herres of hem that ben smytten with byttinge ouer longe holden.

Athi igitur dubium est, quin he ad beatitudinem vie deuia quedam sint: nec perducere eo quemquā valeant. &c

NOw it is no dout than, þ these ways ne ben a maner impedimentes to blysfulnes: ne þ they ne mowen not ledē folke thid, as they beheten to leden hem. But with how great harmes these forsayd ways bē enlaced, I shal shewe you shortly. For why, if þ enforcest the to assemble money, thou must byreuen him his money þ hath it. And if thou wolt shinen with dignities, thou muste beseechen and supplyen hem, that yeuen the dignities. And yf thou coueytest by honour to gone before other folkes, thou shalt defoule thy selfe thorowe bysiest of askyng. If thou desirest power, thou shalt by awaites of thy subiectes anoyously be cast vnder by many partis. Artest thou glorious thou shalt ben so distracte by aspre thynges, that thou shalt forgone sikernesse. And if thou woldest leden thy lyfe in delites, euery wight shal dispise the and forleten the, as thou that arte thral to thing, that is right foule and bitel, that is to sayne, seruaunt to thy bodye. Nowe is it wel sene, how lytel and howe bitel possessyon they coueyten, that putten the goodes of the body aboue her owne reason. For mayste thou surmounten these olyfantes in greatnesse or in weight of body? or mayste thou ben stronger than the bul? mayst thou be swyfter than the tygre? Beholde the

spaces

spaces & the stablenesse, and the swyft course of heuen, and sythe sometyme to wondren on soute thynges. The whiche heuen certes nys nat rather for thele thynges to be wondred vpon, than for the reason by whyche it is gouerned. But the shynynge of thy forme, that is to sayne, the beaute of thy body, how swyft ly passyng is it, and howe tranſitorye, certes it is more shynyng than the mutabilyte of flowres of the sõmer season. For so as Aristotell telleth, that yf þ men had eyen of a beeste that highte Lynx, so that the lokynge of folke myȝt perceen through the thynges that withstõde it. Who so loked than in thentrayles of þ body of Alcibiades that was full fayre in þ superficie without, it shulde seme ryght foule. And for thy, yf thou semest fayre, thy nature ne maketh nat that, but the infeccyuaunce of feblenesse of the eyen that loken. But praise the goodes of the body as muche as euer the lyste, so that thou knowe al gates þ what so it be, that is to sayne, of the goodes of the body, whiche that thou wondrest vpon, mayen ben distroyed or elis dissolued by the heet of a fruer of thre dayes. Of whyche forsayd thynges I may reducē this shortly in a sõme, that these worldly goodes, which that ne mowen geuen that they behyghten, ne benmot parfite by the congregacion of all goodes, that they ne ben not wayes ne pathes that bringē men to blisfulnesse, ne maken men to be blisful.

Heu heu quæ miseros tramite deuios abducit ignorantia: non autum in viridi quærit arbore &c.

ALas, which folye, & whiche ignoraunce misledeth wandring wrecches fro the pathe of verry good. Certes ye seken no golde in grene trees, ne ye gadren not precious stones in bryres: ne ye ne hyden not youre gynges in hye mountayns to catchen fysshe: of the which ye may maken riche feestes.

And yf you lyke to hunte to Roes, ye ne go nat to the fordes of the water that highte Thyrne. And ouer this men knowe wel the crekes and the cauernes of þ see vhyder the flodes, and knowen eke whyche water is moost plenteous of whyte perles, & knowen whyche water habounderh most of reed purpure, that is to sayne, of a maner shelfysh, with whyche men dyen purpure: and knowen whyche strondes habounden moste of tendre fysshes, or of sharpe fysshes, þ highte Echynes. But folke suffren hem selfe to ben so blynde, that hem ne recchen not to know where thilke goodes be yhyd de, whiche that they couerten, but plungen hem in erthe, and seken there thilke good, that surmounteth the heuen that beareth the sterres. Of what prayse may I make that be digne to the nyce thoughtes of men? But I pray that they couerēte ryches and honours, so that whā they haue gotte the fālse goodes with great trauayle that thereby they mowen knowen the very goodes.

Hactenus mendacis formā felicitatis ostendisse sufficeret. qđ si perspicaciter intuearis, ordo ei debitus &c.

IT suffyseth that I haue sayde hyderto, þ forme of false blysfulnesse: so that it yloke now clerely the order of myne entente requyreth þ I shewe the verry weyes of blysfulnesse. Forsoth qđ I I se wel now, þ suffisaunce may nat comen by richesse, ne power by reames, ne reuerence by dignytees, ne glorye by glory, ne ioye by delyces. And wel knowen the causes qđ he. Certes me semeth qđ I that I se them right as though it were through a clere cristall. But me were leuer knowen hem more openly of the. Certes qđ he the reason is al redy. For thylke thynge that symply is one thynge without any deuision, the errour and folye of mankynde deuydeth and departeth it & misdeth it, and transporteth from very & parfite good, to goodes that be false & vnparfite. But say me this: wenest thou that be þ bathe nede of power, þ him ne lacketh nothynge? Yis certes qđ I þ. Certes qđ he thou sayest aryght: for yf so be that there is a thynge that in any partie be feble of power, certes as in that it mote nedes be nedy of forayn helpe. Right so it is qđ I þ. Suffysaunce and power ben of one kynde. Soothe. So semeth qđ I. Philosophie And demest thou qđ he that a thynge that is of thys manere, that is to saye, suffysaunce and myghty, oughte ben dispyced, or elis that it be right digne of reuerēce aboue all thynges? So certes qđ I it is no doute

that it is ryght worthy to be reuerenced. P. Let vs adden (qõ she) reuerence to sufficiaũce and to power, so that we demen þ these thre thynges be al one thinge. B. Certes (qõ I) let vs adden it if we wyl graunt the sothe. P. What demest thou (qõ she) thã is that a derke thing and not noble, that is sufficiaũt, reuerent, and mighty: or els that it is right noble and right clere by celebrare of renõme: Conssyder than (qõ she) as we haue graunted here byforne, that he that ne hath no nede of nothyng, and is most myghty and moste digne of honoure, yf him nedeth any clerenesse of renõme, whyche clerenesse he myght not graunten of him self: so for lacke of thylke clerenesse he might semẽ the feble on any syde, or the more out caste. Glose. That is to say, naye: For who so that is sufficiaunt, myghty, and reuerent, clerenesse of renõme folowerh of the forsayde thynges: he hath it all redy of his suffysaunce. Boece. I maye not (quod I) denye it, but I mote graunten as it is, that thys thinge is ryght celebrable by clerenesse of renõme and nobleſſe. Phi. Than folowerh (quod she) that we adden clerenesse of renomme to the forsayde thynges, so that there be amonges hem no dyfference. Boece. This is a consequence (qõ I) Philo. This thynge than (quod she) that ne hathe nede of no forayne thynge, and that maye do all thynge by hys strengthes, and that is noble and honourable, is it not a mery thynge and ioyfull? Boece. But whence (quod I) that any sorowe might come to this thyng that is suche, certes I maye not thynke Philoso. Than mote we graunten (quod she) that thys thynge be full of gladneſſe, yf the forsayde thynges be sothe. And certes, also mote we graunten, that suffysaunce, power, nobleſſe, reuerence, and gladneſſe be onelye dyuers by names, but her substaunce hath no dyuersyte. Boecius. It mote nedelye be so (quod I) Philosophia. Thylke thynge than (quod she) that is one and symple in hys nature, the wyckednesse of men departeth and deuydeth it: And whan they enforcen hem to getten partye of a thynge, that ne hathe no part, they ne getten hem neither thilke partie that nys none, ne the thynge all hole that they desyre. Boece. In whyche manere (quod I) Philosophia. Thylke man (quod she) that seeketh rychesse to flyen powertye: he ne trauayleth him not for to get power, for he hath leauer be derke and vyle, and eke wythdraweth from hym selfe many naturell delytes, for he nolde lese the money that he hath assembled. But certes in thys maner he ne getteth him no suffysaunce, that power forleteth and that molestie pyckerh, and that fylthe maketh outcaste, and that derkneſſe hydeth. And certes he that desyreth only power, wasteth and scatereth rychesse, and dispyseth delyces and eke honour þ is without power, ne he ne prayseth glory nothing. Certes this seest thou wel that many thinges faylen to him: For he hath somtyme defaute of many necessytees, and many anguyſſhes byten him. And whan he maye not don tho defautes away, he forleteth to be mighty, and that is the thing that he most desyreth. And ryght thus may I make seemable reasons of honour, of glory, and of delyces. For so euery of these forsayde thinges is þ same þ these other thiges ben, that is to sayne, al one thing. Who so euer seketh to getẽ that one of these is not þ other, he ne getteth not þ he desyreth. B. What sayest þ thã, if that a man coueyte to getẽ al these thiges togider. P. Certes (qõ she) I wold say þ he wold get hi souerayn blisfulnes, but þ shal he not fynde in the thynges that I haue shewed, that mowe not yeue þ they beheten. B. Certes ne (quod I) Phi. Than (quod she) ne shulden men not by no way seken blisfulnesse in suche thynges as men wenen that they ne mowe geuen but one thynge synglerly of all that men seken. Boece. I graũt wel qõ I ne non sother thyng maye be sayde. Phi. Nowe haste thou than qõ she) the forme and the cause of false welefulnesse: Now turne and flytte agayn to thy thought, for there shal thou sene anon thylk very blisfulnesse, þ I haue behyght the. Boece. Certes (quod I) it is clere and open, thoughe it were to a blynde man: And that shewdest thou me a lytel here beforne, whan thou enforcedest þ to shew me þ causes of the false welefulnesse. For but if I be begiled than is þ thylke very blyssfulnesse and parfyte, that parfyte ye maketh a man suffysaunt, myghtye, honourable, noble, and ful of gladnes. And for thou shalte wel know, that I haue wel vnderstãden these thynges within my herte: I knowe well that thilke blyssfulnesse that men verily yeuen one of the forsayd thynges, sens they ben all one: I knowe doutlesse þ thylke thynge is full of blyssfulnesse P. O my norice (qõ she) by thys opinion I say that thou arte blyssfull, yf thou put this therto that I shall sayne. B. What is

that (quod I). P. Trowest thou that there be any thyng in this erthely mortall tombynge thynges, that maye bryngen thys estate to. Certes (qõ I) I trowe it not: and thou hast shewed me wel, that ouer thilke good ther nis nothyng more to ben desyred. P. Whose thynges thou (qõ she that is to sayne, erthly sufficiaunce & power, and such thinges erthly, they semeth lykenesse of very good, or els it semeth that they yeuen to mortall folke a maner of goodnesse, that ne be not parfyte, but thylke good that is very and parfyte, that may they not yeuen. B I accorde me well (qõ I) Wht. Than qõ she for as moch as thou hast knowen, which is thilk very blisfulnes, & eke wht be thilk thinges ben, þ lien falsely blisfulnesse, that is to say, that they by disceyte semé very goodes: Nowe behoueth the to know where & where þ now seke thilke very blysfulnesse. B. Certes (quod I) þ desire I greatly, & haue abyden longe tyme to herken it. P. But for as moche (quod she) as it lyketh to my disciple Plato in his boke of Thimeo, that in right lytel thynges men shulden beseche the helpe of god: What iudgest thou þ be nowe to done so that we may deserue to fynde þ seate of thilke soueravn good. B. Certes (qõ I) I deme þ we shullen cleape to the father of all goddes, for withouten him nys there nothyng founded a right. P. Thou saiest a right (qõ she) & began anon to syngen right thus.

O qui perpetua mundũ ratione gubernas,
Terrarũ celiq; sator, qui tempus ab euo, ire
Iubes, stabilisq; manens das cuncta moueri. Quem non externe pepulerunt fingere cause. &c.

Thou father, souerayne & creatoure of heuen and of erthes, þ gouernest this worlde by pardurable reason, that commaundest the tymes to gone, sythe þ age had begynning. Thou that dwellest thy selfe aye stedfast & stable, & yeuest al other thynges to be meued, ne forceue causes ne cesseden the neuer to cõpoun werke of flatering mater, but onely the forme of souerayn good yset with thy thought, þ meued þ freely. Thou that art alderfayrest, bearynge the fayre worlde in thy thought: formedest thys worlde to thy lykenesse semblable, of þ fayre worlde in thy thought. Thou drawest all thynge on thy souerayne ensample, and cõmaundest that this world parfytly ymaked, haue fynly and absolute his perfyte parties. Thou byndest the elementes by nombres proporcionables, that the colde thynges mowen accorden with the hote thinges, and the drye thinges with the moyste: That the fyre, that is purest, ne flye nat ouer hye, ne that the heuynesse ne drawe nat aboue ouerlow the erthes that be plonged in the waters. Thou knyttest togyther, the meane soule of treble kynde moeuyng al thynges, & deuydest it by mebris acordably. And whan it is thus deuyded, it hath assembled a mouynge in to rounes, it goeth to turne agayne to him selfe, and enuyroneth a full depe thought, and turneth the heuen by semblable ymage. Thou by euen lyke causes enhaunsest the soules and the lyfe lyues, and ablyng hem to height by lyghe wames of sartes. Thou sowest hem in to heauen and into erth, and whan they be cõuerted to the by ryght beynge sauce, et ou makest hem returne ayen to the by ayen leding fyre. O father yeue thou to þ thought to lyften vp him to thy grete sete, and graut him to enuyronne the well of goode. And the lyght ffounde graunte him to fyxen the clere syghtes of his corage in the: and tarter thou and to breake þ weyghtes & the bondes of erthely heuynesse, & shyne thou by the brightnesse. For thou art clerenesse, thou art pesyble reste to debonayre folke: thou that art begynnyng, bearer, leder, parde, and weye to loke on the that is our ende.

Quonã igitur, que sit imperfecti boni forma videtur, nunc demonstrandum reor. &c.

For asmoche thã, as thou hast seene whyche is the forme of good, that nys not parfyte, and the forme of good, whyche that is parfyte, I souerayne I þ it were good to shewe in what this perfectio of blisfulnes is set. And in thys thyng I trowe þ we shall fynde enquirynge for to weten, if that any suche maner good as thilke good as thou hast diffynished a litel here before, þ is to sayne, souerayne good, may be found in nature of thinges. For þ vayne imagynacion of thought ne disceyue vs not, and put

bē out of the sothfastnesse of thilke thing that is submytted to vs. But it may not be denyed that thilke ne is, and that is right as a wel of al goodes. For al thyng that is cleped imparfyte is proued imparfyte, by the amenusig of perfection of thing that is parfyte. And herof cometh it that in euery thynge general, if that men sene any thyng that is imparfyte, certes in thylke thynge general, there mote be some thing that is parfyte. For if so be that perfection is don away, men may not thinke ne saye from whence thilke thig is, ꝑ is cleped imperfyte. For the nature ne toke not her begynning of thynges amenused and imparfyte, but it proceedeth of thiges that be al hole absolute, and discendeth so downe in to ꝑ bitrest thynges, and in to thynges empty & without frut. But as I haue shewed a lytell here beforne, that if that there be a blisfulnesse that be freel and vayne, and imparfite, there maye no men doubte that there nys some blysfulnesse, that there is sadde stedfaste and parfyte. B. This is concluded qō I fermely and sothfastlye. P. But consyder also qō she in whome thys blisfulnesse inhabyteth. The comune accorde and conceyte of ꝑ corage of men proueth and graunteth, that god prynce of all thynges is good. For so as nothing may be thought better thā good, it may not be douted thā ꝑ he that no thyng nys better than he nis good. Certes reason sheweth that god is so good, ꝑ it proueth by very force, ꝑ perfyte good is in hym. For if god nys such he ne maye not ben prince of al thing. For certes somthyng possessyng in it selfe parfyte good, shulde be more worthy than god: and it shuld semen that thilke thing were firste and older than god. For we haue shewed apertly that al thinges that ben parfyte, ben firste, or thynges that ben imperfite. And for thy, for as moche as that my reason or my processe ne go not awaye wythoute an ende, we owen to graunten, that ꝑ souerayne good is right ful of souerayne parfyte good. And we haue establysshed, that the souerayne good is very blisfulnesse: than mote it nedes be, that very blysfulnesse is sette in souerayne good. B. Thys take I well (qō I) ne thys ne may not be with saide in no maner. P. But I praye the qō she se nowe howe thou mayste prouen holily, and withoutē corruption, thys that we haue sayd, that the souerayne god is full of ryghte souerayne good. B. In whiche maner (qō I) P. Weneste thou aughte (qō she) that the father of al thynges hath taken thilk souerayne good any where oute of him selfe. Of which souerayne good, men proueth that he is full. Righte as thou myghtest thynken, that god, that hathe blysfulnesse in hym selfe, and thylke blysfulnesse that is in hym were dyuers in substaunce. For if thou wene, that god hath receyued thilk good out of him self, thou mayste wene, that he ꝑ yaue thilke good to god be more worthy than god. But I am beknowe and cōfesse, and that righte dignely, that god is right worthy above all thynges: And yf so be that thys good be in hym by nature, but that is dyuers from him by weyng reason, sens we speken of god prince of al thiges. Fayne who so fayne maye, who was he that conioyned these thynges togyther. And eke at the laste se wel, that a thyng that is dyuers fro any thyng, that thylke thyng nys nat that same thynge, for whyche it is understonden to ben dyuers. Thā foloweth it wel, that thilke thing that by his nature is diuers from souerayne good, that thynge is not souraine good. But certes it were a felonous curtsyneste to thynken that of hym that nothynge nys more worthe. For alway of al thynges the name of hem ne may not bene better than her begynner. For whyche I maye concluden by right very reason, that thylke that is begynnyng of all thynges, thilke same thynge is souerayn god in his substance. B. Thou haste sayde ryghtfully quod I ꝙ Philoso. But we haue graunted (quod she) that the souerayne good is blysfulnesse. Boece. That is sothe (qō I) Philoso. Than (quod she) we moten nedes granten and confesen that thilke same souerayne good be god. Boece. Certes qō I I ne maye not denye ne wythstande the reasons purposed, and I se wel that it foloweth by strength of the premisses. Phi. Loke nowe (quod she) if this be proued yet more fermely thus, that there ne mowen not bene to souerayne goodes that bene dyuers amonge hem selfe. For certes the goodes that ben dyuers amonge hem selfe, that one is not that the other is. Than ne mowen neyther of hem be parfyte, so as either of hem lacketh to other, but that that nys not parfyte, men maye sene apertly that it nys not souerayne. The thynges than that be souerainly good, ne mowen by no waye be dyuers. But I haue wel concluded, that blysfulnesse and god bene the souerayne good, for whyche it mote nedes bene

that

that soverayne blysfulnesse is soverayne dignyte. Boece. Nothynge (qd I) is more sothe-faste than this, ne more ferme by reason, ne a more worthy thynge than God maye not be concluded Philosophye. Upon these thynges than (quod she) right as these geometriciens when they have shewed their proposycions, ben wonte to bringen in thynges ỳ they clepen pozrisines or declaracyens of forsayde thynges, ryght so wol I yeve the here as a corallarye or a mede of Crowne. For why, for as muche as by the getteyng of blysfulnesse men bene maked blysfull, and blysfulnesse is dignite. Than it is manyfest and open, that by the getteynge of dygnite men bene maked blysfull, ryght as by the getteynge of justyce. And by the getteynge of sapyence they be maked wise, right so nedes by the semblable reason, whan they have gotten dyvynite they be made goddes. Than is every blysfull man a god. But certes by nature there ys but one god, but by the participacion of the divynne there ne letteth ne dyshourbeth nothynge, that there ne be many goddes. Boece. Thys is (quod I) a fayre thyng and a precyous, clepe it as thou wylt, be it Corallarye or pozrisme, or mede of crowne, or declaryng. Philoso. Certes quod she nothynge nys fayrer than is the thynge that by reason shulde be added to these forsayde thynges. Boece. What thing (quod I) Philosophie. So quod she as it semeth that blysfulnesse cotayneth many thynges, it were for to weten whether ỳ all these thynges maken or conteynen as a maner body of blysfulnesse, by the diversyte of partyes of membres or els yf any of all these thynges be suche that it accomplysshe by him selfe the substaunce of blysfulnesse. So al these other thynges ben referred and brought to blysfulnesse, that is to say, as to the chefe of hem. Boecius. I would quod I that thou madest me clerely to understande what thou sayest, and what thou recordest me the forsayd thynges. Philosophia. Have I not iudged (qd she) that blysfulnesse is good. Boece. Yes forsoth (quod I) and that soverayne good. Philoso. Adde than quod she thylke good ỳ is made blysfulnesse to all the forsayde thynges. For thylke same blysfulnesse, that is demed to be soverayne suffysaunce, thylke selfe is soverayne power, soverayne reuerence, soverayne clerenesse or ne blesse, and soverayne delyte. What sayest thou than of all these thynges, that is to saye suffysaunce, power, and these other thynges. Ben they than as membres of blysfulnesse, or ben they referred and brought to soverayne good, ryght as all thynges that ben brought to the chefe of hem. Boece. I understande not quod I what thou purposest to seke: but I desyre for to herken, that thou shewe it to me. Philo. Take none thus the discreccyon of this question quod she. Yf all these thynges quod she weren membres to felowship, than weren they divers that one from that other: and suche is the nature of parties or of membres, that diverse membres compowne a body. Boece. Certes quod I it hath well ben shewed here byfore, that all these thynges ben al one thyng. Philo. Than bene they no membres, quod she. For els it shulde seme that blysfulnesse were conioyned all of o parcelle alone, but that is a thynge that may not be done. Boece. This thyng, quod I, that is not dourous, but I abide to herken the trouthe of thy question. Philoso. This is open and clere, quod she, that al other thynges ben referred and brought to good. For therto is suffisaunce required, for it is demed to be good: and for thy is power required, for it semeth also that it be good. And this same thynge mowen we thynken of reuerence, of clerenesse, and of delyte. Than is soverayne good the same and the cause of all that ought to ben desyred. For why, take the ngeyne that withholdeth no good in it selfe, ne semblaunce of good, it ne may not well in no maner be desyred ne requyred. And the contrary or thought that thynges by her nature ne bene not good, algates yf men weenen that they ben good, yet ben they desyred as though they were verray good. And therfore it is sayd that men ought to wene by reyghe, that bounte be the soverayne fyne and the cause of all the thinges that ben to requyre. But certes thilke that is cause for which men requiren any thing, it semeth that thilke same thing be most desyred, as thus: yf that a wight wold ryden for cause of heale, he ne desyreth not so moche the mouving to ryde as the effecte of his heale. Now than sens that al thynges ben requyred for the grace of good, they ne ben not desyred of al folke more than the same good. But we have graunted that blysfulnesse is that same thynge for why-che that all these other thynges ben desyred. Than is it thus, that certes only blysfulnesse is requyred and desyred. By whyche thyng it

shewth clerely, that of good and blysfulnesse is al one and the same substaunce.
Boece. I se not (quod I) wherefore that men myght discorden in this. Philosoph. And we haue shewed, that god and verye blysfulnesse is all one thing. Boece. That is soth (quod I) Philoso. Than mowe we conclude sykerly, that the substaunce of God is sette in thilke same good, and in none other place.

Huc omnes pariter venite capti, Quos fallax ligat ipsorbis catenis, Terrenas habitas libido mentes. Hic erit vobis requies laborum &c.

COmeth al togyther nowe ye þ bene vraughte & bounde with wicked charmes, by the deceyuable delyte of erthly thinges inhabyting in your thought. Here shal be the reste of youre labour: here is the hauen stable in quiete peyble. This alone is the open refute to wretches, that is to sayne, that ye that be combred & diseased with worldely affections, cometh now to this souerayn good, þ is god, that is refute to hem that wyllen come to hym. Al þ thinges þ the ryuer Tagus veueth you with his golden graueis, Or els al þ thynges þ the ryuer Hermus veueth with his reed brike: or that Indus veueth, that is nerre the hote parte of the worlde, that medleth the grene stones with the white ne shoulde not cleren the lokynge of youre thoughte, but hyden rather your blynde corage within her derkenesse
Al that lyketh you here and reyseth and moueth your thoughtes, the erthe hath nourysshed it within hys lowe caues. But the thynynge, by whiche the heuen is gouerned, and whence that his strength, that eschewth the derke ouerthrowyng of the soule, and who so euer maye knowen thilke lyght of blysfulnes, he wyll sayne, that the whyte beames of the sunne ne be not clere.

Assentior (inquã) cũcta enim firmissimis nexa rationibus constant. Cum illa, quãti, inquit, tu estimabis, si bonum ipsum, quid sit, agnoueris &c.

BOece. I assent me (quod I) for all thynges ben stronglye bounden with right ferme reasons. Philoso. Howe moche wylte þ prayseu it (qõ she) if that thou knowe what thylke good is? Boece. I wol prayse it (qõ I) by price wboute ende, if it shal betyde me to knowe also togyther god that is good. Philoso. Certes quod she that shal I do the by very reason, yf þ tho thynges, þ I haue concluded a lytell here before, dwellen onely in her graunteyng. Boece. They dwellen graunted to the (qõ I) that is to sayne, as who sayth, I graunte to thy forsayd conclusyons. Philo. I haue shewed the (qõ she) þ the thinges, þ ben requited of many folke, ne ben not very goodes ne parfyte. For they ben dyuers that one from that other. And so as eche of hem is lackynge to other, they ne haue no power to bringe a good, that is full and absolute. But than at erste bene they very good, whan they ben gathered togyder al into one forme, & in to one werkyng: so that thilke thynge that is suffysaunte, thylke same is power, and reuerence, nobleste, and myrthe.
And forsothe but if al these thynges be al one same thynge, they ne haue not wherby that they mowe be put in the nombre of thynges that ought to be requited & desyred. Boece. It is shewed quod I ne herof may there no man douten. Phi. Therthinges than quod she) that ne ben no goodes, whan they ben dyuers, and whan they begynnen to be all one thyng, than ben they goodes, ne cometh it not than by the getynge of vnite, that they be maked goodes? Boece. So semeth it quod I) Phi. but al thynge that is good quod she graunteste thou that it be good by the participation of good or no? Boece. I graunt it quod I) Philoso. Than vnite thou graunted (qõ she) by semblable reason that one and good be one same thyng. For of thynges, of whiche the effecte nys not naturelly dyuers, nedes her substaunce must be one same thyng. Boece. I ne may not denye it (quod I) Philo. Hast thou not knowen wel quod she that al thyng that is, hath so longe hys dwellynge and hys substaunce, as longe as it is one, but whan it forleteth to ben one, it must nedes dyen and corrumpen togyder? Boece. In whych maner (qõ I) Philoso. Right as in beestes quod she whan the soule and the body ben conioyned in one, and

and dwellen together, it is cleped a beest: and whan her vnite is distroyed, by thy discreuaunce of that one from that other, than sheweth it wel that it is a dead thynge, and it is no lengér no beest. And the body of a wyght whyle it dwelleth in one fourme by coniunction of membres, it is wel sene that it is a figure of mankynde: And yf the parties of the body be deuyded and discreuered that one fró that other, that they distroye the vnite, the body forleeseth to be, that it was before. And who so wolde renne in the same maner by all thynges, he shulde sene that without doute euery thynge is in his substaunce, as longe as it is one. And whan it forleeseth to be one, it dyeth and perysheth. Boece. Whan I consyder quod I many thynges, I se none other. philoso. Is there any thynge quod she that hasmuche as it lyueth naturelly, that forleeseth the talente of the appetyte of hys being, and desireth to come to dethe and to corruption? Boece. If I consider quod I the beestes that haue any maner nature of wyllynge and of nyllynge, I ne fynde no beest, but yt it be constrayned fró without forthe, that forleeseth or dispiseth the entencion to lyuen and to duren, or that wyl hys thankes hasten him to dyen. For euery beest trauayleth hym to defende and kepe the saluacion of hys lyfe, and eschueth dethe and distruccion. But certes I doute me of herbes and trees, that ne haue no felynge soules, ne no naturel workynges, semyng to appetytes, as beestes haue: whether they haue appetite to dwellen, and to duren. philoso. Certes quod she therof dare she not doute. Now loke vpon the herbes and trees, for they weren fyll in suche places as ben conuenable to hem: in whiche places they mowe not dyen ne dyen, as longe as her nature maye defende hem. For some of hem weren in feldes, and some weren in mountaynes, and other were in mareys, and other cleauen on rockes, and some weren plentyous in londes. And yf any wyght enforce him to beare hem in to other places, they weren dede. For nature yeueth to euery thyng that is conuenyente to hym, and trauayleth that they ne dye, as longe as they haue power to dwellen and to lyuen. What wylte thou sayne of thys, that they drawen all her nourythynges by her rootes, ryght as they hadden her mouthes yplonged within the erthes, and theaden by her mareys her woode and her barke? And what wylte thou sayne of thys, that thylke thynge that is right soft, as the marye is, that is alwaye hydde in the secte al within, and that is defended from without by the stedfastnesse of woode, and that the vttereste barkes is put ayenst the distemperaunce of the heauen, as a defendoure, myghtye to suffren harme? And thus certes mayste thou wel sene, howe greate is the diligence of nature: For all thynges remouelen and pulyfyen hem with seed vnmultyplyed. Ne there nys no man, that ne wote wel that they ne ben ryght as a foundemente and rote fyxe, for to duren not onely for a tyme, but ryght as for to dure perdurably by generacion. And the thynges eke, that men wenen ne haue no soules, ne desire they not by semblable reason to kepen that is his, that is to sayn, that is accordynge to her nature in conseruacyon of her beynge and enduringe. For wherfore els beareth lyghtnesse the flames vp, and the weyght presseth the erthe adown, but for as muche as thylke places and thilke mournges be conuenable to euery the of hem. And forsothe euery thyng kepeth thilke, that is accordynge and proper to hym, ryght as thynges that ben contrayous and enemyes corrumpen hem. And yet ben harde thynges as stones cleauen and holden her partyes together ryght faste and harde, and defenden hem in withstandyng, that they ne departen lightly, and yeuen place to hem, that breaken or breden hem: but namelesse they ben coueyted and soone moeued to the same thynges, from whence they be araced. But fyre reseth and mounteth al deuyden. Ne I ne reccche not nowe here of wylful mournges of the soule that is nowyng, but of naturell entencion of thynges, as thus: Ryght as we swalowe the mete that we receyuen, and ne thynke not on it, and as we drawe our breethe wyllyngly that we were not while we slepe. For certes in the beestes the loue of her lyuynges ne of her beynges, ne cometh not of the wyllynges of the soule, but of the begynnynges of nature. For certes thorough constraynynge causes wyll desyreth and embraceth ful oft tymes the deth, that nature dredeth, that is to sayn, as thus: That a man may be constrayned so by some cause, that hys wyll desyreth and taketh the deth, whiche that nature hateth and dredeth ful sore. And sometyme we sene the contrarye, as thus: that the wyll of a wyght disturbeth

and constrayneth that, that nature alwaye desireth and requireth, that is to say the werkes of generacion, by the whiche generacion onely dwelleth and is sustayned the longe duration of mortall thynges, as thus. Thys charite and thys loue that euery thynge hath to hym selfe, he cometh not of the mouyng of the soule, but of the entencion of nature. For the pourueyaūce of god hath yeuen to thinges, that ben create of hym this, that is a full great cause to lyuen and to duren, for whiche they desiren naturelly her lyfe, as longe as euer they mowen: for whiche thou mayste not diedem by no maner, that al thynges that ben any where, that they ne requiren naturellye the ferme stablenesse of perdurable dwelling, and eke the eschewynge of distruccion.

Boece. I confesse quod I that I se well nowe, & certainly without doute, thynges that a while ago semeden vncertayne to me. Philo. So. But quod he thilke thynge that desireth to be and dwel perdurable, he desireth to ben one: for if that one were bidraw, ther ne myght be there none dwellinge no lyuyng, Boece. That is sothe quod I. Philo. Than quod he desiren al thynges one. Boece. I assent quod I philo. And I haue shewed of the that thilke same one is, thilke that is good. So. Ye forsoth quod I philo. All thynges than quod he requiren good, and thilke may se thou discreuen thus: Good is thilke thing that euery wyght desireth. Ther ne may be thought no more bett thing (quod I) for vnther al thynges be referred and brought to nought, & bottom without gouernour dispoyled of one, as of her proper herd, or els yf there beam thynge to whiche that al thynges renden and hyen to, that thynge must be the soueraygne good of al goodes. Philo. Than sayd he thus: O my norrice quod he I haue great gladnesse of the, for thou hast fixed in thy herte the inmoble forthefastnesse, that is to sayn the pryce, but this thynge hath be discouered to the, in that thou sayedest, that thou wistest not a lytel here before. Boece. What is that quod I philo. That thou ne wystest not quod he whiche was thende of thynges, & certes that is the thynge that euery wyght desireth. And for as moche as we haue gadered & comprehended, that good is thilke thynge that is desired of all, than mote we nedes confesse, that good is the fyne of all thynges.

Quisquis profunda mente vestigat verū,
Cupitq; nullis ille deuiis falli, In se reuol-
uat intimi lucem vltus. &c.

Who so seketh sothe by a depe thought, & coueyteth to be disceyued by no mis wayes, let him rollen & treate within himself, the light of his inwarde sight: & let him gadren ayen, enclynynge in to a space the longe mouynges of his thoughtes. And let him teache his corage, that he hath enclosed a hydde in his treasours, all that he hath coueyted or sought fro without: And that thilke thynge that the blacke cloudes of errour whilom had couered, shal light more clereliche than phebus hym selfe ne sheweth. Philo. Who so wol seke the depe groundes of sothe in his thought, and wol nat be disceyued by false propositiouns that gone a mysse from the trouthe, let him well examine and rolle within hym selfe, the nature & proprietes of the thynge. And let him set the forneyn examine & tollen his thoughtes by good deliberacion of that he deme. And lette hym teache the soule, that it hath by naturel principles knowlyche thynges, within it selfe al the trouthe, the whiche he imagyneth to ben thynges without: and than al the derknesse of his nat knowyng, shal fleme more redyerly to the light of his enherit, lyvyng, than the lowne ne foureth to the light without sorthe feyres ne the bodye bringyng the weyght of forsetting ne hath not chased out of your thought al the derknesse of youre knowyng, for certainly the seede of sothe holdeth and coureth within your corage and it is naked onely excited by the wordes and by the blastes of doctrine. For wherfore ris bemeue of your owne wyl the engines when ye be asked but yf so were that the norishing of treasons wyked plungeth with the depe of your herte, that is to sayne, whose thilke men bemen the sothe of any thynge that were asked, and yf there were a roote of sothfastnesse, that were yplonged and hyd in naturel principles, the which sothfastnesse lyued wythin the depenesse of the thought. And yf so be, that the muse and the doctrine of plato syngeth sothe, al that euery wyght learneth, he ne doth nothynge els than, but recordeth, as men recorden thynges that ben forgyten.

Cum

Tum ego, Platoni (inquam) behementer assentior. Nam memoriam tam secundo commemoras. Primum quod memoriam corporea contagione.&c.

Than sayde I thus. I accorde me greatly to Plato, for thou recordest and remembrest me these thynges yet the seconde tyme, that is to say, fro whan I lefte my memorye by the contrarious coniunccyon of the bodye with the soule: And eftsoones afterwarde, whan I lefte it confounded, by thy charge and by the burden of my sorowe, & than sayde he thus.

If thou loke (quod he) fro the thynges that thou hast graunted, it ne shall not been right ferre, that thou ne shalt remembren the other thynge, that thou saydest that thou nyst not. ℙ. Wat thynge qõ I. ℙ. Of the gouernement qõ he that this worlde is gouerned. ℙ. I remembre it well qõ I and I confesse wel, that I ne wyst it nought. But it be so, that I fro nowe from a ferre, what can purpose I, algates I desyre yet to herken it of the more playnely. ℙ. Thou ne wondrest nat qõ he a lyttel here before, that men holde dour, that this worlde is governed by god. ℙ. Certes qõ I never, ne dout I nat ne I nyl never wene that it were to doute, as thou sayst the, but I wot wel þ god governeth this worlde. And I shal anserende by what resons I am brought to this. This worlde qõ I of so manye dyuers and contrarious partes, ne myght never have ben assembled in to one, but yf there were one that conioyned so manye dyuers thynges. And the same diuersite of her natures þ so discordeth, that one fro that other muste departen, and dyuoyden the thynges that ben conioyned, yf there ne were one that governed, that he hath conioyned and ybounde. ℙ. He the certayne order of nature ne sholde nat bring forth so ordeyned meuynges, by places, by tymes, by doynges, by spaces, by qualityes: yf there ne were one that were aye stedfast dwellyng, that ordayned and disposed these diuersityes of meuynges. And thylke thynge what so euer it be, by whyche that al thynges be vnaked & lad, I hope hym god that is a worde that is vsed to all folkes. ℙhilo. Than sayed he: Syrthe thou hast thus thefte thynges, I trowe that I have lyttel more to doue, that thou mighty of welfulnes, hole and sounde, ne se eft sownes thy countre. But let vs loken these thynges þ we have purposed here before. Have I not nombred & sayde (qõ he) that suffysaunce is in blysfulnesse. And we have accorded þ god is thylke same blisfulnesse. ℙ. Yes forsoth qõ I. ℙ. And þ to governe this worlde (qõ he) ne shall he never have nede of none helpe fro without. For els yf he had nede of anye helpe, he ne shulde not have no ful suffysaunce. ℙ. Yes thus it more nedes be qõ I. ℙ. Thẽ governed he by hym selfe alone all thynges qõ he. ℙ. That may not be demed qõ I. ℙ. And I have shewed that god is þ same good. ℙ. It remembreth me well qõ I. ℙ. Than ordereth he al thynges by thylk good quod he fith he which we han accorded to be good governeth al thynges by hym selfe. And he is a key and a sterre, by which the cours of this worlde is kept stable & without corrupping. ℙ. I accorde me greatly qõ I. And I have apperceyued a lyttel here before, þ thou woldest fare thus. Al were it so, that it were by a thynge suppose. ℙ. I trowe wel quod he for as I trowe, thou lyketh nowe more entendyng thy eye, to loken the verr goodes. But nathelesse, the thynge that I shal tell the yet ne shewerth not lasse to token. ℙ. Wherto þ qõ I. ℙ. So as mentrouse qõ he, that manifestly, þ god governeth al thynges by the keye of his goodnesse. And all these same thynges that I have taught the hasten hem by natural entencyon to come to good. Ther may no man doubten that they ne ben governed by purpose. And that they ne conuerten hem of her owne good wil to her ordeynour. As that they ben according and enclyning to her governour and to her kynge. ℙ. It more nedes be so qõ I. For the realme ne shulde not seme blisful, yf there were a yoke of mutinouse ges in dyuers parties, ne the fauvnge of ordeynt thynges ne shulde not be eschewed. ℙ. Is ther nothyng qõ he that kepeth his nature, that enforceth hym to gone ayenst god. ℙ. Ne qõ I. ℙ. And if ye any thyng enforced hym to withstande god, might it anayen at last ayen him that we have graunted to be almyghty by the right of blysfulnes. ℙ. Certes qõ I al verily it ne myght not anayle hym. ℙ. Than is there nothyng quod he that ordeyned maye or wyll withstande to his soueravne god. ℙ. I trowe not qõ I. ℙ. Than qõ he is thylke the soueravn god, that al thynges governeth strongely and ordeyneth hem softly. Boece.

Than sayd I thus, I delyre me quod I not

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only in thendes or i the summe of ꝑ reasons ꝑ thou haste concluded and proued, but thylke wordes that thou vsest, delyte me moch more, so that at laste fooles, that sometyme tenden great thynges, oughten ben ashamed of hem selfe, that is to sayn, that we fooles that reprenhenden wickedly the thinges that touchen godes gouernaunce, we oughten ben ashamed of oure selfe. As I, that sayde that god refuseth onely the werkes of men, and ne entermeteth not of it. Philo. Thou haste wel herde of the fables of the poetes, howe the gyauntes assayleden heuen, with the goddes: but forsothe the debonayre force of god disposed hem as it was worthy, ꝑ is to sayn, destroyed ꝑ gyauntes as it was worthy. But wolde thou that we retornen together thilke same reasons? for peraventure of suche conclucions may ysprongen vp some fayre sparke of sothe. Boece. Do of I as the lyste. Philoso. And what thou of me ꝑ god ne be almyghty? Bo. No man is in doute of it certes of I. Philo. How ignorant douteth it, if he be in hys mynde (quod he). But he that is almighty, ther nis nothynge that he ne may. Boe. That is sothe of I. Philo. May god do yuel of he? Boe. Nay forsothe of I. Philo. Than is yuel nothynge of he? syth that he may don none yuel, that may done al thynges. Boece. Scornest thou me of I or ells paruest thou, or disseruest thou me, that haste so vnorderly with thy reasons, the house of Dedalus to entrelasynge that it is vnable to be vnlaced, ꝑ thou otherwhile entrest ther thou issest, and otherwhile issest there thou entrest. Ne foldest thou not togither by replicacion of wordes a maner wonderfull cercle or enuyronnyng of the simplicite dyuine? For certes a ryght here beforn whan thou began at blisfulnesse, thou saydest that it is souerain good, and that god is the blysfulnesse, for whiche thou vaue me as a cournable yefte, that is to sayne, that no wyght nys blisful, but if he be god also therwith. And saidest eke, that ꝑ forme of good is the substaunce of god and of blysfulnesse. And saydest ꝑ thilke ore is thilke same good, that is requyred and desired of al the kinde of thynges. And thou proudest in disputynge, that god gouerneth al ꝑ thiges of the world, by the gouernaunce of bountie: And saydest that al thynges wolde obeyen to him, and saydest that the nature of yuel is nothynge. And yheste thynges shewdest thou not with no reasons taken fro without, but by proues in cercles and homlich knowyng. The whiche proues drawen to hem selfe her faith and her accorde euerich of hem of other. Phi. Than sayde I thus: I ne scorne not, ne playe, ne disceyue the: but I haue shewed the thing that is greteste ouer all thynges, by the yefte of god, that we whilom prayden. For this is the fourme of diuine substaunce, that is suche, that it ne slydeth not in to vttereste foreyne thynges, ne receyueth not no straunge thynges in hym. But right as Permenides sayde in greke, of thylke dyuine substaunce: he sayd thus, that thylke diuine substaunce tourneth the world and the mouable cercle of thynges, whyle the like diuine substaunce kepeth it selfe without mouynges, that is to sayne, that he moueth neuer: no, and yet it moueth other thinges. But natheles, if I haue sayed reasons that be not taken fro without the compace of the thinge, of the whiche we treaten, but reasons that ben bestowed within compace: there nis not why thou shuldest merueylen, syth thou haste lerned by the sentence of Plato, that nedes the wordes mote ben cosyns to the thynges, of whiche they speken.

Felix qui potuit boni, fontem visere lucidum.
Felix qui potuit gramina &c.

BLissed is that man that may seme the clere welle of good: ioyfull is he that may vnbynde him from the bondes of herthly erthe: The poete of Thrace Orpheus, that whilom had right great sorowe, for the deth of hys wyfe. After that he had maked y constrayned by his vrepely soges, the wodes mouable to renne, and had maked the ryuers to stonden stylle, and had maked the hartes and hyndes to ioynen hir pleasse her sydes to cruell lyons, to herken hys songe, and had maked ꝑ the hare was not agast of the hounde, whan he was pleased by songe: So whan the moore ardaunt loue of hys wyfe, brende the entrayles of hys brestes, ne the songes that hadde ouercomen all thynges, ne myghten not aswagen her lorde Orpheus. He playned hym of the heuen goddes, whiche that were cruel to hym, he wente hym to the houses of the hell: And he tempered hys blandi hynge songes, by resownyng of strynges, and song and

and songe in wepynge, al that euer he had receyued and laued out of the noble welles of hys mother Caliope the goddesse. And he sang with as muche as he myght of wepyng and with as muche as loue, that doubled his sorowe myght yeuen hym and teache hym, & comoued the hell, & requited and besoughte be swete prayer, the lordes of soules in hel of releasynge, that is to save, to yelden hym hys wyfe. Cerberus the porter of hell, with hys fyue heedes was caught, and all abasshed of the newe songe. And the thre goddesses. Furyes and vengeresses of felonyes, that tourmenten and agaste ꝑ soules, by anoye worn sorouful and sory, and teres wepten for pite. Tho was not the heed of Ixion tourmented, by the ouerthrowynge whele. And Tantalus, that was distroyed by the woodeneſſe of longe thruste, dispised the floodes to drynke. The foule that hyght Vultour, that eateth ꝑ stomake or the gysern of Tytius is so fulfylled of hys songe, that it nyl eaten ne tyzen no more. At the laste the lorde and inge of soules was moued to myserycordyes, and cryed: we ben ouercomen (quod he) yeue we to Orpheus hys wyfe to beare hym companye, he hath well ybought her by hys songes and hys dytees: but we wyll putten a lawe to thys, and couenant in the yeft, that is to sayne, that yf he be out of hel, yf he loke behynde hym, that hys wyfe shall come agayne vnto vs. But what is he that maye yeue a lawe to louers? lour is a greater lawe and a stronger to hym self than any lawe that men maye yeuen. Alas, when Orpheus and his wyfe were almoste at the termes of the nyght, that is to sayne, at the laste boundes of hell, Orpheus loked backwarde on Euridice hys wyfe, and lost her, & was deed. Thys fable apertayneth to you all, who so euer desyreth or seketh to lede his thought into ꝑ soueravn day, that is to save, to clerenesse of soueravne good. For who so euer be so ouercomen that he fyxe his eyen in to the pytte of hell, that is to sayne: who so euer set hys thoughtes in erthly thinges, al that euer he hath drawen of the noble good celestyal, he leseth it, whan he loketh to the helles, this is to sayne, into lowe thynges of the erthe.

¶ Thus endeth the thyrde boke of Boece and here after followeth the fourthe.

HEc cum philosophia dixisset tacuit, et oculis grauitate seruata, leuiter, suauiterq; cecinisse, Tum ego non dum penitus insitumerorus oblitus. &c.

Whan Philosophie had songen softly & delectably the forsaid thinges, keping the figure of her chere, and the weyght of her wordes. Than that me had all vttrely forveten the wepynge and the mournynge that was fette in myn herte, forbrake the entencyon of her, that entended yet to sain some other thinges.

O (quod I) thou that arte gyderesse of verytyght, the thynges that thou hast sayde me hytherto, ben to me so clere and shewynge by the deuine loking of hem, and by the reasons, that they ne mowen ben ouercomen. And thylke thynges, that thou tolderst me al be it so that I had whylom forveten hem, for the sorow of the wronge that hath be done to me: yet neuerthelesse they ne were not gretly vnknowen to me. But thys same is namely a tyght great cause of my sorowe, for that as the gouernour of thynges is good, of that yuels mowen ben by any wayes: or els if that yuels passen without punyshynge, the infamy the thyng only, how worthy is it to ben medred vpon. Thou considerest it wel, this is certaynly. But yet to thys thyng there is yet another thinge ioyned more to be wondred vpon. For felonye is Empereresse and Quene full of tyrannyes, and vertue lyth not al only ydle without medes, but it is caste downe, and eke fortroden vnder the fete of felonous folke: and it abyeth the turmentes in stede of wicked felons. Of al whyche thinges there is no wight may merueylen ynough ne complayne, that suche thynges be doone in the reigne of god, that al thynges wote, and al thynges may, and ne wyl not only but good thynges. Than sayde she thus: Certes quod she that were a great marueyle, and an abasshyng without ende, and wel more horrible than all the monsters, yf it were as thou weenest, that is to sayne, that in the syght of dayne house of so moche a father and an ordaynour of meyne, that the vesselles that ben foule and vyle, shulde ben honoured and preyed, & ꝑ precious vessels that shulde ben de-

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fouled and vyle. But it is not so, for yf the thinges, that I haue cõcluded a litel here before, ben kept hole and vnarated, thou shalt wel know by ꝑ auctorite of god, (of ꝑ whose reigne I speke) that certes the good folke be alway myghtie, and the shrewes ben alway outcaste and feble. Ne the vyces be neuermore without payn, ne the vertues ne be not without mede. And that blisfulneisse cometh alway to good folke, and infortune cometh alwaye to wicked folke. And thou shalt wel knowen many thynges of thys kynde, that shulde ceasen thy playntes, & strengthen the with stedfaste sadneisse. And for thou haste seen the forme of verye blysfulneisse by me that haue vttered shewed it the, and thou hast knowen in whom blysfulneisse is sette: al thynge treated, that I trowe be necessary to put forthe, I shal shewen the the way, that shal bringen the ayen vnto thyn house: and I shal fyre feethers in thy thought, by whiche it may arisen in heyght, so that al tribulacion ydone away, thou by my gydyng and by my pathe, and by my stedes, shalte mowen retourne hole and sounde in to thy countrye.

Sunt enim pene volucres mihi, Que celsa conscendunt poli, Quas sibi cum velox mens induit. &c.

Than for the swyfte feethers ꝑ surmounten the height of the heuen, whan ꝑ swyft thought hath clothed it i tho feathers, it dyspyseth ꝑ hateful erthes, & surmoũteth the roundenesse of the great ayre, & it seeth ꝑ cloudes behinde hys backe, & passeth the heyght of the region of the fyre, that enchaufeth by the swyft mouynge of the fyrmament, tyll ꝑ he aryseth in to the houses, that beaten the sterres, and ioyneth the way with the sonne Phebus, & felaushyppeth the waye of the olde colde Saturnus, & he ymaked a knyght of the clere sterre, that is to sayne, whan the thought is made goddes knyght, by the seking of clere trouth to comen to the very knowlege of god. And thilke soule rẽneth by the cercle of sterres, in al the places there as the shynynge myght is ypaynted, that is to sayne, the myght that is cloudeleſſe. For on myghtes that be cloudeleſſe it semeth that the heuen were paynted with dyuers ymages of sterres. And whan he hath done there ynoughe, he shal forleten the laste heuen, and he shal presen and wenden on the backe of the swyfte fyrmamente, and he shall be maked parfyte of the worthypful lyght of god. There holdeth the lorde of thynges the ceptre of hys myght, and attempreth the gouernementes of the worlde, and the shynynge tuge of thynges, stable in hym selfe, gouerneth the swyfte carre or wayne, that is to sayne, the circuler mouynge of the sonne. And yf thy way ledeth the ayen, so that thou be brought thyder, than wyle thou saye, that is the countrye that thou requirest, of whiche thou ne haddest no mynde: but nowe it remẽbreth me wel, here was I borne, here wol I fasten my degre, here woll I dwell. But yf the lyketh than to loken on the derkneſſes of the erthe, that thou haste forleten, than shalt thou sene, that these horrible tyraunnes, that the wretched people dredeth nowe, shullen be exyled from thylke fayre countrye.

Tum ego pape inquã, de magna promittis. Nec dubito, quin possis efficere: tu modo quę exoraueris, ne moreris &c.

Than sayd I thus. O I wonder me ꝑ thou beheetest me so great thynges. Ne I ne dout not that thou ne mayste well performe that thou beheetest: But I praye the thys that thou ne tarye not, to tel me thylke thynges, that thou haste moued. Philoso. Fyrste quod she thou muste nedes knowe, that good folke ben alwaye stronge and myghtye, and the shrewes beneeble and deserte, and naked of al strengthes. And of these thynges certes euery chon hem is declared and shewed by other. For as good and yuell ben two contraryes, yf so be that good be stedfaste, than sheweth the feblesse al openly. And yf thou know clerely the freelneſſe of yuell, the stedfastneſſe of good is knowen. But for as muche as the fayth of my sentence shall be the more ferme and habundant, I wol gone by that one waye and by that other, and I wol conferme the tryuynges that ben purposed nowe on thys syde, and nowe on that side. Two thynges ther ben, in whiche the effecte of al the dedes of mankind standeth, that is to sayne, wyll and power: and if that one of these two fayleth, there ne is nothynge that maye be done. For yf that wyll

lacketh

lacketh, there nys no wight that vndertaketh to do that he wol not done: And if power fayleth, the wyll nys but ydle, and ylaunte for naught. And therof comethit, that if thou se a wight that wolde getten that he may not get ten, thou mayst not doute that power ne fayleth him to hauen that he wolde. Boece. This is open and cleere (qõ I) ne it ne may not bene denyed in no maner. Philo. And yf thou se a wight (quod she) that hath done that he wold done, thou nyst not doute, that he ne hath had power to done it. B. Ho quod I. Phi. And in that that euery wight maye, in that men holden hem mighty to done a thyng. In somoche as a man is mighty to done a thig, in so moch men holde him myghty: and in that that he ne may, in that men demen him to be feble. Boe. I confesse it well qõ I. Phi. Remembre the (quod she) that I haue gathered and shewed by the forsayde reasons, that all the entencion of the wyl of mankynde, whiche that is laddo by diuers studyes, hasteth to comen to blysfulnesse. Boe. It remembreth me well qõ I that it hath bene shewed. Philoso. And recorderh the naughte than quod she that blysfulnesse is thylke same good that men requyren, so that whan blysfulnesse is requyred of all. Boece. It recorderh me nat quod I. For I haue it alwaye in my memorie fyxed. Philo. Yfolke than quod she good and ekе badde enforcen hem without differrence of entencyon to comen to good. Boece. This is very consequence qõ I. Philo. And certaine is qõ she that by getting of good be men maked good. Boe. That is certayne quod I. Philo. Than gotten good mẽ that they desyren. Boece. So it semeth (quod I). Philoso. But wicked folke (quod she if they gettẽ the good that they desyren, they ne mowen not be wicked. Boe. So it is quod I. Phi. Than so as that one and that other quod she desyren the good, and the good folke gotten the good, and not ỹ wicked folke: Than it is no doute that the good folke ne be mighty, and wicked folke be feble. Boe. Who so that euer douteth of this, he ne may not consyder the nature of thynges ne the consequẽce of reasons. Philosophi. And ouer this (quod she) yf that there ben two thynges that haue one same purpose by kynde. And that one of hem pursueth and perfourmeth that same thyng by naturell office, and that other ne may not done thilke office naturell, but followeth by other maner, than is conuenable to nature, him that accomplyssheth his purpose kyndely, and yet he ne accomplyssheth not his owne purpose: whether of these two demest thou for more mighty? Boece. If that I confesse (quod I) that thou woldest say, algates I desyre yet to herken it more plainly of the. Philo. Thou nyst not than denye (quod she) that the mouement of goynge nys in men by kynde. Boece. No forsothe quod I Philoso. Ne thou doutest not (quod she) that thylke naturell office of goynge, ne be the office of fete. Boece. I ne doute it not quod I. Philo. Than (quod she) yf that a wyght be mighty to moue and gothe vpon hys fete, and another, to whome thylke naturell office of fete lacketh, enforseth hym to go creepinge on his hande, whyche of these two oughte to be holden the more myghty by right. Boece Sothe forthe quod I the remenaunte. Philosophi For no wyght ne douteth, that he that maye gon by naturel office of fete, ne be more mighty thanne he that ne maye not. But the soueraryne good (quod she) that is euen lyke purposed to the good and to the badde. The good folke seken it by naturell office of vertues, and shrewes enforcen hem to getten it by diuerse couetises of erthly thinges, which that nys no naturell office to getten thylke soueraryne good. Trowest thou that it be any otherwyse. Boe. Nay quod I. For the consequence is open, and the wynge of thynges that I haue graunted, that nedes good folke moten ben myghty, and shrewes moten bene feble and vnmyghty. Philoso. Thou rennest a tyght before me qõ she and thys is ỹ iudgement, that is to sayne, I iudge of right, as these leches ben wont to hopen of sicke folke, whan they apperceyue, that nature is redressed and withstanderh to the maladye. But for I se the nowe al redy to the withstanding, I shall shewe the more thilke and conuenuel reasons. For loke how greatly sheweth the feblenesse and infirmyte of wycked folke, that ne mowen not comen to that her naturell entencion leadeth hem: And yet almoste thylke naturel entencyon contrarieth hem. And what were to demen than of shrewes, yf thylke naturel helpe had forleten hem, the which naturell helpe of entencion gothe alwaye before hem, and is so great, that whereth it may be ouercomen? Consyder than how great defaute of power, and howe great febleste there is in wicked felonous folke, as who saith, the grete

ter thynge that is coueited, and the desyre not accõplysshed, of the lasse might is he that coueyteth it, and may not acomplysshe. And for thy philosophie sayth thus by soueram good: The shrewes ne requiren not ryghte medes ne bayne games, which they ne maye not folowen ne holden, but they fayleu of thilke somme of the heyght of thynges, that is to sayne, soueram good. The these wrecches ne comen not to the sheere of soueravne good, the which they enforcen hem onely to getten by nightes & by dayes, in getting of whiche good, þ strength of good folke is ful wel yeme. For ryght as thou myghtest demen him mighty of going, that goeth on hys fete tyll he myght comen to thylke place, fro the whiche place there ne lay no way further to be gone: right so must thou nedes demẽ him for ryght mighty, which that getteth and attayneth to the ende of all thynges, whiche that bene to desyren, bey once þ whiche ende there nys nothynge to desyre. Of the whyche power of good folke men maye conclude, that we wicked men semen to be bayne and naked of all strength. For why forsaken they vertues and folowen vyces, nys it not for that they ne knowen not the goodes? But what thyng is more feble and more caytif, than is the blyndnesse of ignoraũce? or els they knowen wel, which thynges they oughten folowen, but lechery and coueityse ouerthroweth hem misturned. And certes so doth the temperaunce to feble men, that mowe not withstanden ayen these vyces. The knowen they not wel that they forleten the good wilfully, and cournen hem wilfully to vyces. And in thys wyse they ne forleten not only to be myghty, but they forleten al utterly in any wyse for to ben. For they that forleten the comune fyne of all thynges that bene, they forleten also therwithal for to bene. And peraventure it shulde semen to some folke, that this wer a mervaile to sayne, that shrewes, which that conteynen the more partes of men, ne ben not, ne haue no beyng. But natheless it is so, and thus stante this thynge. For they that be shrewes, I deny not, but that they be shrewes, but I deny symplye and plainly that they ne be not, ne haue no beyng. For ryghte as thou myghtest sayne of the caravne of a man, that it were a deed man: so graunt I wel forsothe, that vycyous folke ben wicked, but I ne may not absolutely and symplie graũt that they ben. For thylke thyng that with holdeth ordre and kepeth nature, thylke thynge is and hath beynge. But what thyng fayleth that, that is to saye, þ forleteth natures ordre, he forleteth thylke beynge that is set in his nature. But thou wolt sayne, the shrewes mowen. Certes that ne denye I not: but certes her power ne discedeth not of strẽgth, but of febleisse, for they mowen doone wickydnesse, the whiche they ne mygte not, if they myghten dwellen in the forme and in the doig of good people. And thilke power sheweth evydently, that they mowen ryghte naught. For so as I haue gadred a prouet a lytell here before, that yuell is not, and so as shrewes may only but shrewdnes. This conclusyon is al clere, þ shrewes ne mowen ryght naught, ne haue no power. And for as moche as thou understõdest which is the strength of thys power, I haue defynysshed a lytell here before, that no thing nys so mighty as soueravne good. Boece. That is sothe (qõ I) Phi. And thylke same soueravne good maye done none yuell. Boece. Certes no qõ I Philose. Is there any wight than (qõ she) that weneth that men mowen done al thynges. Boece. No man qõ I but yf he be out of his wyt. Philo. But certes shrewes mowẽ doun yuels qõ she) Boece. Ye wolde god quod I that they ne myghten done none. Philo. Than (quod she) so as he that is myghty to done onelye good thynges, he may done all thynges, and they that ben mighty to done yuel thynges, ne mowen not al thynges. Than is it open thynge and manyfest, that they that mowen doun yuell ben of lasse power. And yet to proue this conclusyõ there helpeth me this, that I haue shewed here before, that al power is to be nombred amonge thynges that men oughten require. And I haue shewed that all thynges þ oughten ben desyred be referred to god, right as to a maner heyght of her nature: but for to mowen done yuell and felonye, ne maye not ben referred to god. Than is not yuell of the nombre of thynges that oughten to ben desired and required. Than is it open and clere that the power ne the moving of shrewes nis no power. And of all these thynges it sheweth wel that the good folke ben certaynly myght, and the shrewes doutelesse unmighty. And it is clere and open that thilke sentence of Plato is very and sothe, that sayth that onely wise men may don that they desyren, and shrewes mowen hauten that hem lyketh, but that they desyren, that is to sayne to come to soueravne

good,

good, they ne haue no power to accomplysshe what. For thiewes done what hem lyste, whan by the thinges in which they delyten, they weenen to attayne to thilke good that they desyren, but they ne getten ne attayne no therto, for vyces ne comen not to blysfulnesse.

Quos vides sedere celsos, Solii culmine reges, Purpura claros nitente. &c.

Who so that the couertures of her vayne apparayles myzt stripe of these proude kynges that thou seest sytten an high in her chayres, glyttery ng in shymyng purpure, enuyronned with sorowful armures, manassynge with cruell mouth, blowyng by woodnesse of hert, he shulde sene that thilke lordes beaten withym her corages full straye chaynes: for lechery tourmenteth hem on that one syde with gredy venimes and troublable ire, that arayseth in hem the flode of troublynges, tourmenteth on that other syde, her thought or sorowe halt hem wery straught, or slydyng and disceiuyng hope tourmenteth hem. And therefore sythe thou seest one herd, that is to sayne, one tyraunte bearen so manye tyraunyes, than ne doth thilke tyraunte not that he desyreth sythe he is cast downe vnto so manye wycked lordes, that is to sayne, so many vyces that haue so wyckedly lordshipe ouer hym.

Vides ne igitur quãdo in ceno probra volutantur, que probitas luce resplẽdeat: quo pertinuit vnquam bonis premia. &c.

Seest thou not than in howe great fylthe these thiewes ben wrapped, and with whyche clerenesse these good folke shinẽ. In this sheweth it wel that to good folke ne lacketh neuer mo her medes, ne thiewes lacken neuer more tourmentes. For of all thynges that be done, thilke thynge for whyche any thing is done, it semeth as by ryght, that thilk thig be the mede of that, as thus: If a man renneth in the stadye or in the forlonge for the crowne: than lieth the mede in the crowne for which he renneth. And I haue shewed that blisfulnesse is thilke same good for which al thynges ben done. Than is thilke same good purposed to the werkes of mankynde, right as a commune mede, whiche mede ne maye not be disseuered from good folke: For no wyghte as by ryght, from thenstorth that him lacketh goodnesse, ne shal be cleped good: for which thing folke of good maners her medes ne forsake hem neuer mo. For albeit so that thiewes waren as wod as hem lyst agaynst good folke, yet neuertheless the crowne of wise men, ne shall not fallen ne faden fro forayne thiewdnesse, ne benymmen not fro the corage of good people her propre honour. But yf anye wyght reioysed hym of goodnesse, that he had taken fro wythoute, as who sayth, if a man had his goodnesse of any other man than of hym selfe: certes he shal haue him thilke goodnesse, or els some other wight myghte bynome it him. But for as moche as to euery wight his propre bounte yeueth him his mede, than ar erle shall he fayleu of mede whan he forleeseth to be good. And at the laste, so as all medes ben required, for men weenen that they be good, who is he that nold deme, that he that is right mighty of good, were parteles of mede? And of what mede shall he be reguerdoned. Certes of right fayre mede and right great, aboue n al medes. Remembre the of thilke noble corallarie that I yaue the a litel here beforne, and gather it to gyder in this maner. So as god hym selfe is blisfulnesse, than is it clere and certayn, that al good people ben maked blisful, for they ben good and thylke people that ben blisful, it accordeth and is conuenable to be goddes. This is the mede of people suche, that no dayne ne shal empairen it, ne no wyckednesse shall bryken it, ne power of no wight ne shal not amenuse it, that is to saine, that ben maked goddes. And sythe it is thus, that good men ne fayleu neuer more of her mede, certes no man ne may doute of the departable payne of thiewes, that is to saine, that the paine of thiewes departeth not from hem selfe neuer mo. For so as good and yuell, and payne and medes be contrarye, it more nedes be, that right as we se betyden in guerdone of good, that also more the payne of the yuel answer by the contrary parties to thiewes. Nowe than so as bounte and prowesse ben mede to good folke, also is thiewednesse it selfe tourmente to thiewes. Than who so euer is entersched and defouled with payne, he ne doubteth not, that he is entersched and defouled with yuell. Yet thiewes than wolden prayse hem selfe, may it semen to hem that they ben with

outen

ouren partie of tourment, sythe they ben such that the vttrest wickednesse, þ is to saye, wicked thewes, which is the vttrest & worst kind of shrewdnesse, ne defouleth ne entecheth not hem onely, but enfecteth & enuenymeth greatly. And also loke on shrewes, that ben the contrarie partie of good men, howr great payne folowshyppeth and fouleth hem: for thou hast lerned a lytel here beforne, that al thyng that is and hath beyng, is one, and thilke same one is good: than is thys the consequence, that it semeth wel, that all thyng that is and hath beynge, is good, that is to sayne, as who sayth, that beynge, vnite and goodnesse is all one. And in thys maner it folowyth than, that all thynge that sayleth to be good, it styntyth for to be and for to haue any maner being: wherfore it is that shrewes styntyn for to be that they weren. But thylke other forme of mankynde, that is to sayne, the fourme of the body without, sheweth þ these shrewes weren whylom men, wherfore whan they bene perturbed and tourned in to malyce, certes than they haue forlorne the nature of mankynde: But so as onelye bountie and prowesse maye enhaunsen euerye man, ouer men: than mote it nedes be that shrewes, which that shrewdnesse hath caste out of the condycion of mankynde, bene put vnder the meryte and deserte of men. Than berydeth it, that if thou seeste a wight whiche that is transtourmed in to vices, thou mayest not wene that he be a man: for if he be ardaunte in auarycr, and that he be a raueinour by violēce of forayne rycheſſe, thou shalte sayne that he is lyke a wolfe. And if he be felonous and withouten reste, and exercyse his tonge to chydinges, thou shalte liken him to the hounde. And if he be a priuy awaytour hydde, and reioyseth him to rauysche by wyles, thou shalte sayne hym lyke to the fore whelpes. And yf he be distempred & quaketh for ire, men shall wenen that he beareth the corage of a lyon. And if he be dredeful and flyenge, and dredeth thynges wlyche that ne oughten not to be dredde, men shal holde him lyke to the hart. And yf he be slowe and astonyed and lasche, men shall holde hym lyke to a an asse. And yf he be lyghte and vnstedfaste of corage, and chaungeth ayr his studyes, men shal holde him lyke to the brydes. And if he be plounged in foule and vnclene luxuryes, he is withholden in the foule delyces of the foule sowe. Thā folowyth it, that he that forletteth boūte and prowesse, he forletteth to be a man, sythe he ne may not passen in the condycion of god, he is turned in to a beest.

Vela Naricii ducis, et vagas pelago rates,
Cursus appulit insule, pulchra qua residēs dea,
Solis edita semine. &c.

CIrcus the wynde arryued þ sayles of Vlixes duke of the coūtre of Narice and his wādring shyppes by the see in to the yle there as Circes the fayre goddesse doughter of the sun dwelleth, that medleth to her newe gestes, drinkes that ben touched & maked vb enchaūtemēts. And after þ hyr hande myghty ouer þ herbes had chaūged hyr gestes in to diuers maners, that one of hem is couered his face vb forme of a Boor, that other is chaunged in to a Lion of the countre of Marmorike, and his nayles & his tethe weren. That other of hem is newlyche chaunged in to a wolfe, & howlyth whā he wolde wepe, that other goth debonayrly in the house as a Tygre of Inde. But all be it so that the godheed of Mercury that is cleped þ byrde of Archadie hath had mercy of þ duke Vlixes bysieged with dyuerse yueles, & hath vnbounden him fro þ pestilence of his hostesse, algates the towers and the maryners hadde by this ydrawen in to hyr mouthes, and dronken the wicked drinkes. They þ were worden swyne, hadden by this schaunged hyr mete of breed, for to eten akorne of Okes. None of hyr lymmes ne dwelleth with hem hoole, but they haue lost the boyte and þ body, only her thought dwelleth with hem stable, þ weepeth and bywayleth the monstreuous chaungynge that they suffren. O ouer lyght hande, as who sayth feble and lyght is the hand of Circes þ enchauntereſſe, that chaungeth the bodyes of folke in to beestes to regarde and to compare son of mutacyon that is maked by vices, ne the herbes of Circes ne be not myghty, for al be it so that they may chaungen the lymmes of the body, algate yet they may not chaunge the hertes, for within is yhyd the strēgth and the vigoure of men in þ secretour of hyr hertes, that is to saine, the strength of reason, but thylke venyms of vices to drawen a man to hem more mightely thā the venym of Circes, for vices ben so cruell that they persen & thorowe

come passen the courage within, and thoughe they ne anoye not the body, yet dyces woodé to destroyen men by woundé of thought.

Tu ergo fateor, inquã, nec iniuria dici video uiuos, tamen si humani corporis speciem ferunt. &c.

Than sayde I thus: I confesse and am aknowen it qõ I ne I ne se not that men may se saye, as by right, that shrewes ben chaunged in to beestes, by the qualyte of her soules, all be it so that they kepen yet the forme of the bodye of mankynde: but I wolde not of shrewes, of whiche the thought cruel & wode, wooderh alwaye to the destruction of good mẽ, that it were leful to hem to done that.

Certes quod she ne it is not leful to hem, as I shall well shewe the in conenable place: but natheless if so were that thilke that men were bene lefull to shrewes, were bynommed hem, so that they ne myght not anoyen or don harme to good men, certes a great partye of the payne to shrewes shulde bene alleged and releued. For all be it so that it ne seme credible thynge peraventure to some folke, that it more nedes be that þ shrewes ben more wrecches and sely, whan they have full done and parfourme that they coueyten, than yf they myght not accomplysshe that they coueyten. for it so be that it be wrecchednesse to wilnen to done yuell, than is it more wrecchednesse to mowen done yuell, without whiche mowyng, the wrecched wyll shulde languysshe without effecte. Than sythe euery of these thynges hath his wrecchydnesse, that is to sayne, wyll to done yuell, and mowynge to done yuell, it more nedes be that they shrewes be contrayned by her unselynesses, that wolen & mowen and parfourmen felonyes and shrewdnesses. So I accorde me qõ I but I desyre greatly, that shrewes sholden soone thylke unselynesse, that is to sayn, that shrewes weren dispoyled of mowynge to done yuell. Philo. So shulden they quod she soner peraventure than thou wolden, or soner than they hem self were: for there nys nothyng so late in so shorte boundes of this lyfe, that is longe to abyde, namely to a courage immortell. Of whyche shrewes the great hope & the ryve compassynges of shrewdnesse, is oft destroied by a sodeyn ende of they be ware. And that thyng establysshyth to shrewes, þ ende of her shrewdnes, for if þ shrewdnes maketh wrecches, than must he nedes be most wrecche þ longest is a shrewe, the whych wycked shrewes wolde I demyn aldermoste caytyfes and unsely, if her shrewdnes ne were fynyshed at leest way by dethe, for yf I have concluded sothe of the unselynesse of shrewdnes thã shewyth it plainly, that thilke wrecchednes, is withouten ende, the which is certayne to be perdurable. Boece. Certes quõ I this conclusyon is harde and wonderful to graunte. But I knowe well that it accordeth moche to thynges that I have graunted here beforne. Philos. Thou hast quod she ryghte estymacion of thys. But who so euer deme that it be a harde thynge to accorde hym to a conclusion, it is right that he shewe that some of the premysses bé false, or els he ought shewe that the collacyon of propoysycyons nys not spedeful to a necessary conclusyon. And yf it ne be not so, but that the premysses ben igraũted, there nys not why he shulde blame the argument. for this thing þ I shal te the more, ne shall not seme lasse wonderfull, but of the thynges that bene taken. Also it is necessary, as who sayth it foloweth of that, which that is purposed beforne. Boece. What is þ quod I pray. Certes quod she þ is, þ these wrecched shrewes be more blysful or els lasse wrecches that abyen þ tourmentes that they have deserued, than if no payne of Justyce ne chastysed hem. Of this ne say I not nowe, for that any man myght thynke þ the maners of shrewes bene corryged and chastysed by vengeaunce, & that they be brought to the ryght way by the drede of tourmente, ne for that they seuen to other folkes ensample to flen fro vyces. But I understand yet in another maner, that shrewes ben more unsely whan they ne be not punysshed, all be it so that there ne be had no reason or lawe of correccyon ne none ensample of lokynge. Boece. And what maner shall that ben qõ I other than hath be tolde here beforne. Philos. Have we not graunted than quod she that good folke ben blysfull, and shrewes ben wrecches. Boece yes quod I. Philo. Than quod she yf þ auce good were added to the wrecchednesse of any wyght, nys he not more weleful, than he that ne hathe no medling of good in his solitary wrecchednesse. Boe. So semyth it quod I. Phi. And what sayest thou than quod she of thylke wrecche

that lacketh all goodes, so that no good nys medled in his wretchednesse, and yet ouer all his wickednesse, for whiche he is a wrerche, ꝑ there be yet another yuel annexed and knyt to hym, shall not men demen hym more vnsely, than thylke wretche, of whyche the vnselines is relieued by the participacion of some good. Boece. Why shuld he not (quod I) Phi. Than certes (quod she) han shrewes whan they ben punysshed somewhat of good annexed to hir shrewdnesse, that is to sayne, the same payne that they suffren, whiche ꝑ is good, by ꝑ reason of Justyce. And whā thilke same shrewes escapen without tourment, than haue they sōwhat more of yuell, yet ouer the wyckednesse that they han done, that is to sayn, defaute of paynes, whyche defaute of payne thou haste graunted is yuel, for the deserte of felony.

Boece. I ne may not denye it (quod I) Philo. Moche more than (qō she) ben shrewes vnsely whan they bene wrongfully delyuered fro payne, than whan they bene punysshed by ryghtfull vengeaunce. But this is open thynge and clere, that it is ryght that shrewes ben punysshed, and it is wyckednesse & wronge that they escapen vnpunisshed. Boece. Who might denye it quod I ꝓ Philosophie. But (quod she) may any man deny that all that is ryght ne is good: and also the contrarye, that all that is wronge is wycked. Boece. Certes (quod I) these thynges ben clere ynoughe, and that we haue concluded a lytel here beforne. But I pray the that thou tell me yf thou accordest to setten ne tourmēt to the soules, after that the body is ended by the deth, that is to sayn: vnderstandest thou aught, that soules haue anye tourment after the dethe of the body. Philoso. Certes (quod she) yea, and that ryght greate, of whyche soules (quod she) I trowe that some ben tourmented by asperneſſe of payne, and some soules I trowe ben exercised by a pourgynge mekenesse, but my counsayle nys nat to determyne of thys paynes. But I haue trauayled and tolde yet hyderto, for thou shuldest know that the mowyng of shrewes, whiche mowynge the semeth to be vnworthy, nis no mowynge, and eke of shrewes, of whyche thou playnedest ꝑ they ne were not punisshed that thou woldest se that they ne were neuer mo without the tourmentes of her wickednesse. And of the lycence of the mowynge to don yuel, that thou praydest ꝑ it myghte some be ended, and that thou woldest sayne lernen that it ne shoulde not longe endure. And that shrewes ben more vnsely yf they were of lenger durynge, and moste vnsely yf they weren perdurable. And after this I haue shewed ꝑ, that more vnsely ben shrewes whan they escapen without her rightfull payne, than whan they ben punished by ryghtfull vengeaunce. And of this sentence folowethit, that thā ben shrewes constrayned at the last wyth moost greuous tourment, whan men wene that they ne be not punysshed. Boece. Whan I consyder thy reasons (quod I) I ne trowe nat that men sayne any thynge more veryly. And yf I tourne ayen to the studyes of men, who is he to whom it shulde seme, that he ne shulde nat onely leuen these thynges, but eke gladly herken hem. Philo. Certes (quod she) so it is, but me may nat, for they haue theyr eyen so went to the derknesse of erthly thinges, that they ne may nat lyfte hem vp to ꝑ lyght of clere sothfastnesse. But they ben lyke to byrdes, of whiche the nyght lyghtneth her lokinges, and the day blyndeth hem. For whan men loken nat the ordre of thinges, but her lustes and talentes, they wene that either the leue or ꝑ mowynge to done wickednesse, or els the scapynge without payne be wrekefull. But consyder the iudgement of ꝑ perdurable lawe, for yf thou coferme thy courage to the best thinges, thou ne haste no nede of no iudge to yeuen the pryce or mede, for thou haste ioyned thy selfe to the moost excellent thynges. And if thou haue enclined thy studyes to the wycked thinges, ne seke no foreyne wrekery out of thy selfe, for thou thy selfe haste thrist thy selfe in to wycked thinges, right as thou mightest loke by diuers times the forme erthe and the heuen, and that al other thinges flyten fro without, so that thou were in neyther, ne se nothynge more. Than sholde it semen to the, as by only reason of lokynge, that thou were nowe in the sterres and nowe in the erth, but the people loketh nat on these thinges. What than, shal we than approche vs to hem that I haue shewed that ben like to beestes. And what woldest thou sain of this, if that a man had al forlorne his sight, & had forveten ꝑ he euer sawe, & weued that no thing fayled him of perfection of mankynde. Nowe we which mighten sene the same thinges, wolde we nat sayne that he were blynde, ne also ne accordeth nat the people to that I shall sayn, the which thinge is sustened by as stronge foundementes of reason, that is to

sayne

tain, that more vnsely ben they that don wrō-
ges to other folke, than they that the wronge
suffren. Boe. I wolde heren thylke same rea-
sons (quod I) Phi. Deuyest thou (quod she)
that all shrewes ne ben worthy to haue tour-
ment? Nay (qd I) Philoso. But (quod she) I
am certayne by many reasons, that shrewes
ben vnsely. Boe. It accordeth quod I)
Philo. Than ne doutest thou not (quod she)
that thylke folke þ ben worthy of tourment,
that they ne be wrecches. Boece. It accor-
deth well (quod I). Philoso. If thou were
than sette a iuge or a knower of thinges, whe
ther trowest thou that men shulde tourmen-
ten hem that hathe done wronge, or els hem
that suffred the wronge? Boece. I doute not
(quod I) that I nolde do sufficyent satisfa-
cion to hem that haue suffred wronge, by the
lawe of hem that hath done wronge. Phi.
Than semeth it (quod she) that the doer of
wronge is more wrecch, than he that suffred
wronge. Boece. That folowerth wel (quod I)
Philoso. Than quod she by these causes and
by other causes, that bē enforced by the same
rote, þ filthe or synne by þ proper nature of it
maketh mē wrecches, & it sheweth wel þ the
wronges that men don vs not the wrecched-
nesse of hym that receyueth the wronge, but
the wrecchednesse of him that doth þ wronge.
But certes (quod she) these oratours or aduo-
cates done al the contrarye, for they enforcen
hem to commoue the Juges to haue pyte of
hem that done the greuaūces & the wronges,
the whiche shrewes it were a more couenable
thynge, that the accusours or aduocates, nat
woth, but pyteous & debonayre ledden the
shrewes that haue don wronges to the iuge-
ment, right as men leden syke folke to the le-
che, for that they shulden syken out the ma-
ladres of synne by tourment. And by thys co-
menaunt either þ entente of aduocates shulde
cesse in al, or els if the office of the aduocates
wold better profiten to men, it shulde be tour
ned in to the habyte of accusacion, that is to
sayn, they shulden accuse shrewes and not ex-
cusen hem. And eke the shrewes hem self, if it
were leful to hem to sen at any clyft þ vertue
that they haue forletten, & sawen þ they shul-
de putten adowne the sythes of her vices by
þ tourmentes of paynes, they ne oughten not
fight for þ recompensacion, for to geten hem
bounte and prowesse, whiche that they haue
lost, demen and holde that the syke paynes
weren tourmentes to hem, and eke they wol-
den refuse the attendaunce of her aduocates,
and taken hem selfe to her Juges and to her
accusours, for þ whiche it betideth, that as to
the wyse folkes, there nys no place yleften to
hate, that is to sayn, that hate ne hath no pla-
ce amonge wyse men. For no wight wol haten
good men, but if he were ouermuche a foole,
and for to haten shrewes, it nis no reason. For
right as languishynge is maladye of body,
right so ben vyces and synne malady of cou-
rage. And so as we ne demē nat þ they which
that ben syke of her body, ben worthy to ben
hated, but rather worthy of pyte. Wel more
worthy nat to ben hated, but for to be had in
pyte ben they, of whych the thoughtes ben so
destrayned by felonous wykednesse, þ is more
cruel than any languyshynge of body.

Quid tantos iuuat erectare meritis, &c.
propria farum sollicitare manu? Si mouerit
pectus, propinquat ipsa sponte sua, polluere
nec remoratur equos. &c.

What delyteth you to erecten so
great mouynge of hatredes, &
to hasten & busyen the fauour
of poeticon of your dere-worthy
your propre hādes, that is to
sayne, by batayls or contrarie-
for if ye aske the deth, it hasteth him of his
owne wyl, ne the ne tarryeth not his swyfte
horse. And þ men that the serpēs, & the lyon,
and the tigre, and the beere, and the bore, ben
to sleen with their teth, yet thylk same men ge-
ken to sleen cuetiche of hem other with dart
de. Lo, for her maners ben diuers and discor-
daunt, they mouen vnryghtful batailes & cruel
batayles, and wylnen to perysshe by euene
chaungynge of dartes, but the reason of cru-
elte nys not ynough ryghtful. Yet thou this
yelden a couenable guerdō to the deserts of
men, loue ryghtfully good folkes, and haue
pyte on shrewes.

Hunc ego video, quam, quę sit vel felicitas
vel miseria in ipsis proborum atq; improbo-
rum meritis constituta. Sed in hac ipsa fortu
na populari, &c.

Thys I se well (quod I) eyther
what blyssfulnesse, or elles what
vnselynesse is establyshed in the de-
serres of good men and of shrewes.
But in thys syke fortune of the people I

se somwhat of good, and somwhat of yuel. For no wyse manne had not leauer be cryed poore and nedye, and nameleſſe, thanne for to dwellen in hys eyre, and flouren of rycheſſe, and be redoutable of honour, and ſtronge of power. For in this wiſe more clerely and witneſſully is the office of wyſe men treated, thā the blyſſulneſſe of power, and gouernours, is as it wer chadde amonges the people, that be neyghbours and ſubiectes, ſithe that namely priſon, lawe, and theſe other tourmentes of lauful paines, be rather owed to felonous citezyns: for the whiche felonous eytezyns the paynes be eſtablyſſhed, more than for good people. So. Than I meruayle greatly (qō I) why that the thinges be ſo myſſe entrechaunged, that tourmentes of felonyes preſſen and confounden good people, and ſhrewes rauiſſhen medes of vertue, and ben in honours and great eſtates. And I deſire eke for to weten of the, what ſemeth the to be the reſon of this ſo wrongful a concluſion. For I wolde wonder wel the laſſe, if I trowed that all thinges were medled with fortunous hap. But nowe creepeth and encreaſeth myn aſtonyenges god gouernour of thynges, that ſo as god yeueth oft tymes to good men goodes and myrthes, and to ſhrewes yuel and aſpre thynges: And yeueth ayen to good folke hardneſſe, and to ſhrewes he graunteth hem her wyll, and that they deſiré. What difference may there be by-twene that that god dothe, and happe of fortune, yf men knowe not the cauſe why it is. Philo. Be it is no meruayle (qō ſhe) thoughe that men wenen, that there bee ſomwhat folyſhe and confuſe, whan the reaſon of the ordre is vnknowen: but althoughe that thou ne know not the cauſe of ſo great a diſpoſicion. Natheleſſe, for as muche as god the good gouernour attempreth & gouerneth ỳ world, ne doute the not but al thynges ben don aryght.

Si quis Iretuti ſidera neſcit,
Mergatq; ſeras equore flammas,
Propinqua ſummo
cardine labi,
Cum nimis ſeleris explicet ortus,
Cur legat tardus plaſtra Bootes. &c.

Who ſo ỳ know not ỳ ſterres of Arcture, turned to ỳ ſouerayn centre or poynte, ỳ is to ſayne, turned nigh to ỳ ſouerain pole of the firmament, & wote not why the ſterre Bootes paſſeth or gathereth his waynes, & drēcheth his late flambes in the ſee, and why that Bootes the ſterre vnfoldeth hys ouerſwyfte arſynges, than ſhal he wondren of the lawe of the high ayre. And eke, yf that he ne knowe not why that the hornes of the full moone waxen pale and infect, by the boundes of the derke night, and howe the moone derke and confuſe, diſcouereth ỳ ſterres that ſhe had couered by her clere viſage. The comune errour moueth folkes and maketh wery her baſyns of braſſe by thilke ſtrokes, that is to ſay, that ther is a maner people that hight Cothātes, that wenen that whā the moone is in the eclypſe that ſe be enchaūted, and therfore for to reſcue the moone they beaten her baſyns wyth thilke ſtrokes. Ne no manne ne wondreth whan the blaſtes of the winde Chorus, beten the stronges of the ſee, by quakyng flodes. Ne no man ne wondreth whan the weyght of the ſnowe, harded by the colde, is reſolued by the brennyng heate of Phebus the ſonne, for here ſeme men redily the cauſes. But the cauſes yhidde, that is to ſayne in heuen, troublen the breſtes of mē The mouable people is aſtouned of al thinges that comen ſelde and ſodaynly in mouage, but the troubly errour of our ignorāce departeth fro vs, ſo ỳ yf they wiſten the cauſe why that ſuche thynges betyden, certes they ſhulden ceaſe to ſeme wonders.

Ita eſt inquā. Sed cum tui numeris ſit latentium rerum cauſas euoluere, velataſq; caligine explicare rationes: queſo vti hinc decernas. & cete.

Thus it is (quod I) but ſo as thou haſte yeuen or beheyght me to vnwrappe the hydde cauſes of thynges, & to diſcouer me the reaſons couered wyth darkeneſſe, I praye thee, that thou deuyſe and ſuge me of thys matter, and that thou doe me to vnderſtande it, for thys myracle of thys wonder troubleth me tyght greatlye. And thanne ſhe a lyteli what ſmylynge ſayde. Thou cleapeſt me (quod ſhe) to tell that is greateſt of all thynges, that mowen ben aſked, and to the whiche queſtion vnneth there aught ynoughe to lauenir, as who ſaythe, vnneth is there anye thynge to anſwere parfytlye to thy queſtyon, for the matter of it is ſuch, that whan o doute is determyned and cutte awaye, there waxen other doutes without nombre, ryght as the

heedes

hedes of Idre the serpent waren, the which serpent Hercules slough: ne there ne were no maner ne none ende, but if a wight constrayned the doutes, by a ryght lyuely and quicke eye of thought, that is to sayne, by bygoure and strength of wytte. For in thys mater men weren wonte to maken questions of the simplicite of the purueyaunce of God, & of ỹ order of destine, & of sodayne hap, & of knowing of predestinacyon dyuine. And of the iyborte of freewyll, the whiche thynges thou thy selfe appercyuedest wel, of what weight they be. But for as muche as the knowynges of these thynges is a maner porcyon or medycyne to the, al be it so that I haue lytel tyme to done it, yet neuertheleſſe I wolde enforcen me to shewen somwhat of it: but alt ough the nothinges of dyte of muſike delicteth the, thou muſte ſuffren and forbearen a lytel of thylke delyte, whyle that I weue to the resons knit by ordre. Bo. Is it lyketh to the, go I so do. Philo. Tho spake she right as by another beginnynge, and sayd ryght thus. The engendryng of al thynges quod she and al the progressyons of mouable nature, and al that ỹ moueth in any maner, taketh hys causes, hys ordre, & hys fourmes, of the stablenes of diuine thought: And thylke dyuyne thought that is set and put in the toure, that is to sayn, in the bryght of the simplycite of god, stablyſheth many maner giſes to the thynges that ben to done, the which maner whan that men loken it, in the pure clennesse of the dyuyne intelligence, is cleped purueyaunce. But whan thylke maner is referred by men, to thynges that it moueth or disponeth, than of olde men it was cleped destynye, the whiche thinges, if that any wight loketh wel in hys thought, ỹ strength of that one and of that other, he shal lyghtlyche mowe sene, that these two thynges ben dyuers. For purueyaunce is thylke dyuyne reason, that is establyſhed in the soueraine prince of thynges, the which purueyaunce disponeth al thynges. But certes destinye is the disposycon and the ordinaunce cleuyng to mouable thynges, by the whiche disposycon the purueyaunce knytteth all thynges in her ordre: For purueyaunce embraseth al thinges to heape, al though they be diuers, and al thoughe they be infinite, but destenye certayne departeth and ordayneth al thynges syngulerly, and deuydeth in mouyng, in places, in formes, and in tymes, as thus: Let the vnfoldynge of temporal ordinaunce assembled and oned in the lokynge of the dyuyne thought be cleaped purueyaunce, and thylke same assemblynge and onynge deuyded and vnfolden, lette that be called destynye. And al be it so that these thynges ben dyuers, yet neuertheleſſe hanged that one on that other, for why, the ordre destinably procedeth of the symplycyte of purueyaunce. For ryght as a werkeman perceyueth in his thought, ỹ forme of a thyng that he wol make, and mouyth the effect of the werke, and leadeth that be had loked before me in hys thought symply and presently by corporall ordynaunce: certes ryght so god in his purueyaunce disponeth symplerly and stably, the thynges that be to done, but he administreth in maners and in dyuers tymes by destynye, thilk same thinges that he hath disponed, than whether destynye be exercysed either by some dyuine spirites, seruantes to the diuine purueyaunce, or els by some soule, or els by al nature seruynge to god, or els by the celestyall mouynges of sterres, or els by the vertue of angels, or els by dyuers subtelty of dyuels, or els by any of hem, or els by hem all, the destynable ordinaunce is conuen and accõplyched. Certes it is open thyng that the purueyaunce is an vnmouable and symple fourme of thynges to doone, and the mouable bonde and the temporal ordinaunce of thynges, whiche that the diuyne simplesse of pourueyaunce hath ordayned to done, that is destynye. For whiche it is that al thynges that ben put vnder destynye, ben certes subiectes vnto pourueyaunce, to whiche pourueyaunce destynye it selfe is subiecte and vnderput, but some thynges ben put vnder purueyaunce, that surmounten the ordynaunce of destenye.

And tho ben thylke that stable ben tyed nygh to the firſte godhed, they surmounten the order of destynable mouablyte. For right as cercles turnen about a same centre or axeboute a poynt, thylke cercle that is innercſte moſte vnto him, he toucheth to the symplesse of the middle, & is as it were a centre or a poynt to that other cercles, that rounden about him: and thylke that is vttered, compaſſed by larger enuironnynge, is vnfolde by larger spaces, in so much as it is fartherest fro the middelest symplycite of the poynte. And yf there be any thing that knytteth and felouſshippeth hym selfe to thylke myddle poynte, it is constrayned in to symplycite, that is to say, in to

vnmouablite

vnmouablyte, and it craseth to ben bad and lyte dyuerlly. Right so by symblable reaſó, thilke thing that departeth furtherest fro the first thought of god, it is vnfolden and also submitted to greater bondes of deſtyne, and in so muche is the thynge more free and loce fro dignite, as it aſketh and holdeth nere to thilke centre of thynges, that is to sayne, to god. And yf the thynge cleueth to the ſtedfaſtneſſe of the thought of god, a be without mouynge, certes it surmounteth the necessyte of deſtenye. Than suche comparison as is betwyxte vnderſtandynge, and of thynge that was engẽdred to thing that is of time, so stet nyte, and of the cercle to the centre, right so is the ordre of mouable deſtune, to the ſtable ſimplycte of pouruyaunce. Thylke ordinaunce mouyth the heuen and the ſterres, and attemprith the elementes togyder among hem ſelf, and transformeth hem by enterchaungeable mutacó. And thylke same ordre norysheth ayen al thynges growynge and falyng adowne, by ſymblable progeſſiõs of ſedes and of fruis, that is to sayne, male and female: And thys ylke ordre constrayneth the fortunes and the dedes of mẽ by a bonde of causes not able to be vnbounden: the whiche deſtynable causes whan they passen our fro the begynninges of vnmouable puruyaunce, it moste nedes be þ they ne be not mutable, as thus: Be the thynges wel gouerned, if that the ſimplycte dwelleth in the hyeste thought, he setteth forth the ordre of causes vnable to be moued. And this ordre constrayneth by the proper habitude the mouable thynges, or els they shulden flee fro hym. For whiche it is, that thynges semen confuſe and troubleye to vs men, for we ne vnderſtonden not ne conſyder thylke ordinaunce of thynges, the proper maner of euery thyng, diſſeyng hym to good diſpoſeth hem al, for there nys nothyng done for yuel, for thylke thynge that is done by wicked folke, nis not done for yuel. The whiche thynges, as I haue shewed ful plenteously ſeme good, but wicked errour miſturneth hem, ne the ordre comynge fro the poynte of sourayne good, ne endeyneth not fro hys begynninge. But thou mayste saye, what thereſt may ben a worſe confuſyon, than that good men haue sometyme aduerſyte, and sometyme proſperite: and the wicked haue now also thynges that they deſyren, and owe thynges that they haten. Ne bethen men trust nowe in ſuche holynesse of thought, as who saythe be men now so wiſe, that ſuche folke as they demẽ to be good folk or thewes, that it moste nedes be, þ folke be ſuch as they weneue. But in this maner domes of meune diſcorden, that thilke men that some folke demen worthy of mede, other folke deme hem worthy of torment, but let vs graunt: I ſuppoſe that some man may wel deme or know the good people and the badde, may be than knowe a ſe thylke interest attemperaũce of corage, as it hath be wonte to be sayde of bodyes, as who sayth: may a man speaken of complexciõns & attemprauce of bodies, ne it ne is not, as who saith, but it is lyke a meruayle or a miracle to hem that ne knowe it not, why that ſweete thinges be couenable to some bodyes, þ ben hole, & to ſom people bitter thiges be couenable: & also why ſome people ben holpe with light medicines, and ſome people be holpen with bitter medicines: but nathele ſe tho that know the maner, & the temprauce of heale and of malade, ne maruayleth it nothyng. But what other thing semeth helth of corages but bonte & what other thing semeth malade of corage but vices, who is vs kepere of good & bitter maye of yuel, but god the gouernour & leder of theughtes: the whiche god, whan he hath beholden from the hygh tour of hys puruyaunce, he knoweth what is couenable to euery wight, and leaueth hem that he wot wel that is couenable to hem. Lo, here of cometh & here of is done thys miracle of the ordre deſtinable, whan god that al knoweth hath ſuch thyng, of whiche thyng vnknowynge folke ben abaſhed, but for to conſtrayne, as who saith, but for to comprehende and reſeme thynges of the hyeste beginneſſe, the whiche that mannes reaſon may vnderſtande. Thylke man that thou wenest to ben evyl ſuffre & right keping of equite, the contrarye of that semeth to the hyeste puruyaunce that all wote. And I can my ſayinge reſeth, that the vicrtyous cauſe liketh to the gobbes, and the cauſe ouercome liketh to Catoq. Thanne what semeth thou mayste seme þ is done in this worlh vnſoped or els vnknowe, certes it is the right ordre of thynges, but as to thy wicked opinion, it is a confuſyon. But I ſuppoſe that some man be ſo wel thewed, that the blame in generall & the ingrement of mankynde accorden hem togyther of hym: but he is ſo vnſtedfaſt of corage, that yf any aduerſyte come to hym, he wol for leten paraunture to continue innocencye, by

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the which he ne may not withholde fortune: than the wise dispẽsacion of god sparyth him, the which man aduersite might enpayren, for that god wyl not hym to trauayle, to whome that trauayle nys not couenable. An other man is parfyte in al vertues, and is an holye man and nyghe to god, so that the pouruey-aunce of god wold deme, that it were a felony that he were touched with any aduersitee, so that he wol not suffre, that such a mã be with any bodyly maladye moued. But so as sayd the philosopher the more excellent is by me ryde in great, that vertues haue coured the bodye of the holy man. And ofte tyme it betyd-eth, that the iuge of thinges that bẽ to done is stirred to gouern to good folke, for that the malyce haboundaunce of thewes shulde ben abated. And god veueth and departeth to o-ther folke prosperitees and aduersitees, med-led to hrape, after the qualyte of her corages and remoueth some folke by aduersitees, for ther ne shulde not waxen prowde by longe welefulnesse. And other folke he suffreth to trauayled with harde thinges, for they shulde confermen the vertues of corage by exercitacion of usage of pacyence. And other folke dreden more than they oughten, that whiche they mighten well beaten, and some suffre that they mowe not beare, and thilke folke god leadeth in to experiẽce of heuinesse, in aduersite and forsomfull thinges. And many other folke haue bought honourable renome of here worlde, by the price of glorious deth.

And some men that ne mowe not ben ouer-comen by tourment, haue veuen ensample to other folke, that vertue may not ben ouer-comen by aduersityes. And of all these thin-ges there is no doute, that they ne ben done rightfully and ordayned, to the parfyte good of hem, to whome we seen these thinges be-fore. For certes that aduersityes commeth some time to thewes, and sometyme that they de-serue, it cometh of their forsayd causes. And of forsomful thinges that ben done to thewes, ther is no man ne wondreth, for al men wene that they haue deserued it, and that they ben of wicked merytes. Of which thewes the tur-mente agasteth sometyme other to doone te-wesnes: and sometyme it amendeth hem that suffreth the tourmentes. And the prosperyte that is veuen to thewes, sheweth a great ar-gumente to good people, what thynge they shulde demen of thylke welefulnesse, whiche prosperite men seme oft serne to thewes: In which thing I trowe that god dispenseth, for parauẽture ỹ nature of some man is so ouer-throwynge to cruel and so vncouenable, that the nedy poueste of hys housholde might ra-ther agreue hym to done felonyes, and to the malady of hym god putteth remedy to veuen hym richesse. And some other man beholdeth hys coscience defouled with synnes, and ma-keth comparyson of hys fortune and of hym selfe: and dredeth parauenture that the blis-fulnesse of which the plage is ioyful to hym, that the lesyng of thilke blysfulnesse ne be not sorowful to him, & therfore he wolde chaunge his maners: and for he dredeth to lese his ver-tue, he forleeseth his wickednes. To other folkes welfulnesse is veuen perauenture, that whan the ouerthrowyth hem in to destruccion that they han deserued, and to some other folkes veuen power to punyshen, for that it shall be cause of continuacion & increce of good to folkes, and cause of turment to thewes. For so as there is none alwayes betwixt good folkes and thewes, ne thewes ne welefulnesse accorden among hem selfe and betwixt hem selfe. For that thewes displesen of hemselfe in the ver-ces, the whiche vices al to renden hem selfe with vices, and done oftentime thinges that thinges whan they haue don ben ful displesaun-that the thinges ne shulde not ben don. For which thing the soperam pouruey-aunce hath maked oftentime miracle, in suche wise that some thewes fro that they haue hated wrongefully felowes of other thewes, they waxen ashamed in to hate of hem that ben moued hem, and to enmyte to the trouthe of frendshipe. Thanne they suffren to be punished that they haue hated. Certes oftentime the diuine mene ne the whiche might make good that good, whanne hem the vices resisten-bly, and disturben the effecte of the good, as who sayth, that yuel is good vnto the myghte of god, for the might of god ordeyneth thilke yuel to good for one ordre enbraceth al thinges. So that what so he departeth from the reason of thylke ordre that is assigned to him, al gates yet he diuerteth into another ordre, so that nothyng is lefte to falle in the realme of diuine pouruey-aunce, as who sayth, no-thing is without ordynaunce in the realme of diuine pouruey-aunce, sith that the right strong god gouerneth al thynges in this worlde, for

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it is not lefull for men comprehende by wytte ne vnfolden by word al the subtel ordinaunce and the disposicyon of the diuyne entente, for only it ought to suffice to haue loked that god hym selfe, maker of al natures, ordayneth all thiges to good, while that he halleth to with hold the thynges that he hath maked it to his semblaunce, that is to say, for to with holden þ thinges in to good, for he him selfe is good. He chaseth out al yeuels fro the boūde of his comynalties, by the ordre of the necessyte destynable: for whiche it followeth, that yf thou loke the purueyaunce, ordeynyng the thinges that men weneu be outragyous or habound-daunt in erthes, thou shalt not seue in no place nothynge of yuell. But I se nowe that thou art charged with the weight of the question, and wery with length of my reason, and that thou abydest some swetnesse of songe, take than this draught, and whan thou art wel refreshed & refrete, thou shalt be more stedfaste to flye in to hyther questyons or thynges.

Si vis celsi iura tonantis. Plura solers cernere mente, Aspice summu culmina celi.

IF thou wyse wolte demen in thy pure thought, the ryghtes or the lawes of the hye thonder, that is to sayne of god, loke thou and beholde þ hightes of the souerayn heuen: There kepen the sterres by rygh tful alyaunce of thynges her olde peace: The Sonne ymoued by his roodye fyre, ne disturbeth nat the cold cercle of the moone, ne the sterre ycleped the Beer, that enclyneth his rauyshynge courses, abouten the souerayn height of this worlde. Ne the same sterre Ursa, nys neuer mo washē in the depe westren see, ne coueteth nat to dyen hys flambes in the see of the Occian, although it se other sterres yplonged in the see: And Hesperus the sterre boodeth and telleth alwaye the late myghtes: And Lucifer the sterre bryngeth ayen the clere daye. And thus maketh loue entrechaungeable, the perdurable courses, and thus is discordable batayle yput out of the countreye of the sterres. This acordaunce atempreth by euenlyke maners the Elementes, that the moyst thynges stryuynge with the drye thynges, yeuen place by stoundes: And that the colde thynges forneuen hem by fayre to the hote thynges, & that the lyght fyre ariseth in to height, and the heuy erthes anailen by her weightes: by þ same causes the flourysh yere yeldeth swete smelles, in the first sommer season watrynyng, and the hote sōmer dryeth the cornes, and Autumpne cometh ayen of heuy apples, and the fletyng rayne bedeweth the wynter, thys attemprance nourisheth & bryngeth forth al thynges that bereth lyfe in this worlde, and thilke same attemprance rauishyng, hydeth, benymeth, and drēcheth vnder the lauedeth al thiges yborne. Amonge these thynges sytteth the hyghmaker, kynge and lorde, welle and begynnynge, lawe & wise iuge, to done equite, & gouerneth & enclyneth the bridels of thynges: And tho thinges that he sterreth to gone by mouynge, he withdraweth and arresteth, and affirmeth the mouable or wandrynge thynges. For if þ he ne called nat ayen the ryght goyng of thinges. And if that he ne constrayned hem nat eft sones in to roundnesses enclyned, the thinges that ben now continued by stable ordinaunce, they shulde departen frome her welle, that is to sayne from her begynnyng and fallen, that is to sayne, tournen in to nought. This is the cōmune loue to all thynges: and all thynges aslen to ben holden by the fyne of good, for els ne myghten they nat laste, if they ne come nat eftsones ayen by loue retourned to þ cause þ hath yeuen hem beynge, þ is to sayn god.

Iam ne igitur vides quid hec omnia que diximus consequantur. Quid nam inquit. Omnem inquit. &c.

SEyst thou nat than, what thynge folowth al þ thynges that I haue sayd. Boece. What thinge quod I. Philo. Certes quod she al utterly, that al fortune is good. Boece. And how may that be quod I. Philo. Now we understande quod she So as all fortune, whether so it be toyfull fortune or aspre fortune, is yeurneyther by cause of guerdonyng, or els of exercysyng of good folkes, or els bycause to punisshen, or els chastisen shrewes: Than is al fortune good, the whiche fortune is certayn, that it be either ryghtfull, or els profytable. Boe. Forsoth this is a ful very reson quod I and if I consider the pourueyaunce and the dedyne that thou oughtest me a litel here beforne, this sentence is susteyned by stedfast resons. But if it lyke vnto the, lette vs nombren hem amonges thylke thynges, of whiche thou sayd-dest a

dest a lytel here before, that they ne were not able to ben wened to the people. Phi. Why so (qd the). Bo. For that the commune worde of men quod I misuseth this maner speche of fortune, and sayne ofte tymes, that the fortune of some wight is wicked. P. Wylte thou than qd the that I approche a lytel to ꝑ wordes of the people, for that it seme nat to hem, that I be ouer moch departed, as fro ꝑ vsage of mankynde. Bo. As thou wolte qd I. Phi. Semeth thou not (qd the) that all thynge that profyteth is good. B. Yes. (qd I) Phi. Certes all thynge that exerceth or corrigeth, it profyteth. Bo. I confesse well qd I. Philo. Than is it good qd the). Bo. Why not qd I. Phi. But this is the fortune (quod the of hem that either be put in vertue, and bataylen agaynst aspre thinges, or els of hem that enclynen and declynen fro vyces, and taken the way of vertue. Bo. This ne may I not denye (quod I) philo. But what sayest thou of the merry fortune that is yeuen to good people in guerdon, demeth of the people that it be wicked. Bo. Nay forsothe quod I but they demen as it is soth, that it is right good. Phi. What sayest thou of the other fortune (quod the) that all thoughe that it be aspre and restrayneth the sherwes by ryghtfull turment, weneth aught the people that it be good. Bo. Nay quod I but ꝑ people demeth that it is most wretched of al thinges that may be thought. P. Kare nowe and loke well quod the lette we in folowynge the opynyon of the people, haue confessed and concluded thynge which that is vnable to ben wened to the people. Boece. What is that qd I. P. Certes qd the it foloweth or cometh of thinges that ben graunted, that al fortune what so euer it be, of hem that bene either in possessyon of vertue, or in the encrease of vertue, or els in the purchasig of vertue, that thylke fortune is good, & that al fortune is right wicked to hem that dwellen in sherwdenesse, as who sayth, and thus weneth nat the people. Bo. That is sothe qd I. All be it so that no man dare confesse it, ne knowe it. Phi. Why so qd the. For right as the stronge man ne semeth nat to abasshen or disdayne, as ofte tyme as he heareth the noyse of the batayle: Ne also it semeth not to ꝑ wise man to dearen it greuously, as ofte as he is ledde into stryfe of fortune. For bothe to that one man and eke to that other, thilke difficulte is the matter to that one man of encrease of his glorious renome, and to that other man to conserue hys sapyence, that is to saye, to the asprenesse of his estate, for therfore is it called vertue, for that it susteyneth and enforceth by his strēgthes, so that it nys not ouercomen by aduersytees. Ne certes thou that art put in encrease or in the heyght of vertue, ne hast not comen to fleten with delyces and for to maken of bodily luste. Thou sowest or plantest a ful ergre batayle in the corage ayenst euery fortune: For that the sorowfull fortune confoūde the not, ne that the merry fortune ne corrumpe the not, occupye the meane by stedfaste strengthes. For all ꝑ euer is vnder the meane, or all that ouerpasseth the meane, despyseth welefulnesse, as who sayth it is vycious, and ye hath no mede of his trauayle, for it is sette in your hande, as who sayth, it lyeth in your power what fortune you is leuest, ꝑ is to saye good or euel, for al fortune ꝑ semeth sharpe or aspre, yf it ne exercyse not the good folke, ne chastyse the wicked folke, it punysheth.

Bella bis binis operatus annis, Vlixes arbores pyrgietumus, &c.

The werker atrides, ꝑ is to sayn Agamenon, that wroughte and compassed the .x. batayles by ten yere, recouered and purgeden wrekyng, by the destruccion of Troye, the lost chambres of marryage in his brother, that is to saye, that Agamemnon wan ayen heleyne, that was Menelaus wyfe, his brother. In the meane while that this Agamemnon desyred to yeuen sayles to the grekes nauye, and brought ayen the windes by bloode he vnclothed hym of pyte of fader, and the sorie preest yeueth in sacrifreng, the wretched cutynge of the throte of the doughter, that is to say, that Agamemnon let cut the throte of his doughter by the preest to maken auaunce with his goddes, and for to haue wynde, with whiche he might wenden to Troye. Ulixes, that is to say Ulixes, bewepte his felowes vlosse, the whiche felowes the feers Polipheimus lyggynge in his greate caue, had frette and deuyst in his empyte wombe: But nathe-les Polipheimus woode for his blynd vrsage yelde to Ulixes loye, by his sorowful teeres, that is to say, that Ulixes smote out ꝑ eye of Polipheimus, ꝑ stode in ꝑ forheed, for whiche

Ulixes had ioye, whan he sawe Polipheмus wepynge and blynde. Hercules is celebrable for his harde trauayle, he damned the proude Centaurus, halfe horse halfe man, & byraste the dispoyling fro ꝑ cruel lyon, that is to say, he slough the lyon, and byraft him his skinne. He smote the brides that nyght Arpyes with certayne arowes. He rauisshed apples fro the waking dragon: and his handē was the more heauy for the golden metall. He drough Cerberus the hounde of hel by the triple chaines. He ouercomen, as it is sayde, hath put an vnmeke lord fodder to his cruel horse, that is to say, Hercules slough Dromedes, & made hys horse to fretten him: and he Hercules sloughe Idra the serpente, and brente the venym. And Achileus the floode defouled in hys forhead, bycam his shamefaste visage in hys strondes, that is to say, that Achileus could transfigure him selfe in to dyuers lykenes, & as he faught with Hercules, at laste he tourned him in to a bul, & Hercules brake one of hys hornes: and he for shame hyd him in hys ryuer. And ouer that he Hercules cast adown Antheus the gyaunt in the strōdes of Lybie. And Cacus appeysed the wrathes of Euander, that is to say that Hercules slough the monster Cacus, and apeysed with that deth the wrathe of Euander. And ꝑ bristled bore marked with bornes the sholders of Hercules, the whych sholders the hye cercle of heuen shulde thrylle. And the last of his labours was, that he sustayned the heuen vpon his necke vnbowed, and he deserued eftsones the heuen to be ꝑ last ende of trauayle. Sothe now than ye stronge men there as the great ensample ledeth you. O myce men why make ye your backes, as who sayth: oye slowe & delycate men, why se ye aduersytees, and ne fight not ayenst hem by vertue, to winnen the mede of heuen: for the mede ouercomen, reuerth the sterres, that is to sayne, that whan that erthely luste is ouercomen, a man is maked worthy to the heuen.

Here endeth the fourthe boke of Boece, and folowēth the fyfthe.

Dixerat, orationisq; cursum ad alia quedā tractanda atq; expedienda vertebat. P. Tum ego, vera quidem inquam. &c.

She had sayd and tourned the course of her reason to some other thynges, to be treated and to be sped. Bo. Than sayde I, certes rightful is thyn admonestyng and ful digne by auctorite. But ꝑ thou saydest whilom, ꝑ the question of the deuyne puruiaunce, is enlaced with many other questyons, I vnderstande well and proue it, by ꝑ same thynge. But I aske, yf that thou weneſt that hap be any thynge in any wayes, and yf thou weneſt ꝑ hap be any thynge, what is it. Philo. Than quod she I shall me to yelden assoilen to the det of my beheſt, and to shewen and open the way, by which way thou mayste come ayen to thy countree: but al be it so that the thynges whiche ꝑ thou askest, ben ryght profytable to knowe, yet ben they dyuers, & what fro ꝑ path of my purpose, & it is to dout, that thou ne be maked wery by myche wayes, so ꝑ thou ne maist nat suffise to measure ꝑ rest wayes. Bo. Ne doute the therof nothynge of I). For to knowen thylke thinges togyder, in the whiche thinges I delyte me greatly, that shall ben to me in stede of rest, sythe it nys nat to douten of the thynges folowynge, whanne ry thing of thy disputacion shall haue ben stedfast to me, by vndoutous fayth. Phi Than (sayd she that maner woll I done to the, and began to speaken ryghte thus. Certes (quod she) yf any wyght defuyssche hap in thys maner, that is to sayn, ꝑ hap is ne thynge ybrought forthe by folyssh mouynge, & by no knettynge of causes. I confirme that hap nys ryght naught in no wyse, and I deme all vtterly, that hap nys, ne dwelleth but a voyce, as who sayth, but an ydell worde, wythout any signification of thing cōmitted to that voyce. For what place might ben lefte or dwellynge in folye and to dysordenaunce, sythe that god leadeth and contrayneth al thinges by ordre, for this sentence is very sothe, that nothynge hath his beinge of naughte, to the which sentence, none of these olde folke ne withsayd neuer, all be it so ꝑ they ne vnderstanden it nat, by God, pryncē and begynner of worchynge, but they casten, as a maner foundemente of subiecte material, that is to sayn, of the nature of al reason. And if that any thyng is ywarē or comen of no causes, than shall it seme, that thilke thynge is comen or woren of naught. But if this ne may nat be done, than is it nat

possyble that hap be anye suche thynge, as I haue defynyched a lytel here beforne. Boece. Now shal it than be (qõ I) nis there than no thyng that by ryght maye bene cleped eyther hap or eis aduenture or fortune: or is there ought, al be it so that it is hyd fro the people, to whiche thynge these wordes bene conuenable. Phi. Syne Aristotle qõ she in the booke of hys phisyke, defynyssheth thys thynge by short reason, & nygh to the soth. B. In whych maner qõ I. P. Is ofte qõ she as men done any thyng for grace of any other thynge, and another thynge than thylke thynge that men entenden to done betydeth by some causes, it is cleped hap, right as a man dalfe the erthe vpcause of tyllynge of the felde, and founde there a gobet of golde bedoluen, than wenen folke that it is befal by fortunous betydyng. But forsothe it nys nat of naught, for it hath his propre causes, of whiche causes ỳ course vnforeseen & vnware, semeth to haue maked hap. For if ỳ tyller of ỳ felde ne dolue not in ỳ erthe, & if the hider of the golde ne had hyd the golde in that place, the golde ne had not bene foũde. These ben than the causes of ỳ abredgyng of fortuit hap, the which abredgynge of fortuit hap cometh, of causes of encountrynge & flowynge togider to hem selfe, & nat of ỳ entencyon of the doer. For neyther the hyder of the gold, ne ỳ deluer of the felde, ne vnderstonden nat, ỳ the gold shuld haue ben foũde. But as I sayde, it betyd & ran togyder, ỳ he dalfe there as ỳ other had hyd the golde. Now may I thus defynyche hap. Hap is an vnware betydyng of causes, assembled in thynges that ben don for som other thyng. But thilke ordre procedyng by an vnescheuable betydyng togyder, which ỳ discendeth frõ the wel of purueyaunce, that ordeineth al thynges in her places and in her tymes maketh, that the causes renken and assemblen togyther.

Ripis Achemenie scopulis vbi uersa sequẽtum, Sectoribus fugit spicula. &c.

TIgris and Eufrates, resolué and springen of o well, vp the cragges of the roche of ỳ couẽtre of Achemenie, there as the the stronge barayls turen her dartes, returnynge in the brestes of hem that folowen hem. And soone after the same ryuers Tigris and Eufrates, vnioynen and departen her waters, and if they comen togider, and bene assembled and cleped togyder in to o courle, thã moten thilke thynges sterten togider, wherby that the water of the enterchaungynge stoode bringeth. The shippes and the stockes araced with the stode moten assemblen, and the waters medled, wrapperh or implyeth many fortunel happes or maners, the whiche wandrynge happes natheles, thilke beerynge townesse of the erth, and the flowynge ordre of the flydyng water gouerneth. Riȝt so fortune that seineth, as it suffereth with flaked or vngouerned bridles, it suffereth brydles, that is to sayn, to ben gouerned, & passeth by thilke lawe, that is to sayne, by the deuyne ordenaunce.

Animaduerto inquã, quas uel ruderis tractẽ, consencio. Sed in hac herentium. &c.

THis vnderstande I well quod I and I accorde me that it is ryght as thou sayst. But I aske yf there be anye liberte of free wyll in thys ordre of causes, that cleuen thus togider in hem selfe, that is I wolde wete, if that the deuynall chayn constrayneth the mouynge of the courages of men. Philosophia. Yes qõ she ther is liberte of free wyll, ne there ne was neuer no nature of reason, that it ne had liberte of free wyll. For euery intellect that may naturally vsen reason, it hath the demynge by whiche it deserneth and demeth eueryche thynge. Than knoweth it by it selfe thynges that ben to flyen, and thynges that ben to desiren, and thylke thynge that any wight demeth to be syzed, that asketh or desyreth he, & euerych thynge that he troweth be to dreden he dredeth. In al thinges that reason is in hem also is liberte of wyllynge and of nyllynge, but I ne deuyne nat, as who sayth, I ne gesse nat, that this liberte be euen like in al thynges. For holy in the soueraynes deuynes substaunces, that is to sayn, in spirites, iugement is more clere & wil nat corrumpe, & myghty red to spedon thynges that ben desyred. But ỳ soules of men moten nedes bene more fre, whan they losen hem in the speculacyon or lokynge of the deuyne thought, and lasse free whan they flyden in to the bodyes and yet lasse free whan they ben gadered togider & comprehẽded in eerthly membres, but the laste seruage is whan that they ben veuen to vices, & haue fall from the possessyon of her propre reason. For after

that they haue cast away her eien fro the light of the souerayn sothfastnesse, to lowe thinges and darke, anone they darke by the clowde of ygnoraunce, and be troubled by felonous talentes, to the which talentes whan they aprochen and assenten, they heapen and encreasen the seruage whyche they haue toyned to hem selfe. And in this maner they ben captiues fro her propre lybertie, the whiche thing natheles the lokyng of the deuyne pourueyaunce seeth, that al thinges beholdeth & seeth fro eterne, & ordeyneth hem euerich in her merites, as they ben predestynate, & it is sayd in greke, that all thinges he seeth, and al thynges he heareth.

Puro clarum lumine phebum, Pelliful canit oris homerus, &c.

HOmer with the hony mouthe, that is to sayne, homer with the swete dites singeth, that ỳ sunne is clere by pure lyght. Natheless yet ne may it not by the infirme lyght of his bemes, breken or perten the inwarde entrayles of the erthe, or els of ỳ see. So ne seeth not god maker of the great world, to him ỳ loketh al thinges from an high, ne vnderstandeth nothinges by heyneesse of erthe, ne the night ne withstandeth not to him by the blacke clowdes, thylke god seeth in a stroke of thought al thiges that ben, weren, or shul come: and thilke god for he loketh and seeth all thinges alone, thou maist sayne that he is the very sonne.

Tum ego ozen inquã difficiliore rursus ambiguitate confundor, &c.

THan sayd I thus, nowe am I confounded by a more harde doute thã I was. Philosopia. What doute is that quod she for certes I conceite nowe by suche thynges thou arte troubled. Boece. It semeth (quod I) to repugnen and to contrarye greatlye, that God knoweth before al thinges, and that there is any fredom or liberte, for if so be that god loketh all thinges before, ne god ne may not ben deceyued in no maner. Than moste it nedes be, that all thynges the which that ỳ pursueyaũce of god hath sene before to come, for whiche if that god knoweth tofore, not only the werkes of men, but also her counsayls and her wylles, than ne shall there be no liberte of arbytre, ne certes there ne may be none other dede, ne no wyl, but thilke which that the deuyne purueyaunce that ne may nat ben deceyued hath fedled before, for if ỳ they mighten writhe awey in other maner than they ben pursueyed, than ne shuld there be no stedfast prescience of thige to comen, but rather an vncertayne opinion, the whiche thyng to trowen of god, I deme it felony and vnlefful. Ne I ne proue nat thylke same reason, as who sayth, I ne alowe nat, or I ne prayse nat thilke same reason, by which that some men wenen ỳ they mowen assoylen and vnknytten the knotte of this questyon. For certes they seyn, that thing nys nat to comen, for that ỳ pursueyaunce of god hath seen before that it is to comen, but rather the contrary, and that is this, that for that ỳ thinges is to comen, that therfore ne maye it nat ben byd fro the pursueyaunce of god. And in this maner this necessyte sly deth ayen in to the contrary party, ne it ne behoueth nat nedes, that thynges bedden that ben ypursueied, but it behoueth nedes that thynges that ben to comen ben ypursueyd, but as it were ytrauayled, as who sayth that thilke answere procedeth nyt as though men trauayleden or weren busy to enquyren, the which thig is cause of ỳ which thinges. As whether the prescience is cause of the necessyte of thynges to comen, or els that ỳ necessite of thinges to comen is cause of the purueyaunce. But I ne enforce me nat nowe to shewen it, ỳ the beridynge of thinges ywist before is necessarye, howe so or in what maner, ỳ the ordre of causes hath it selfe, al thoughe that it ne seme nat ỳ the prescyence bring in necessyte of berydyng, to thinges to comen. For certes if that any wyghte sitteth, it behoueth by necessyte that the opinion be sothe of hym that conceyueth that he sytteth, and ayenwarde also is it of ỳ cõtrary, for if ỳ opinion be soth of any wight for ỳ he sytteth, it behoueth by necessyte that he syt. Than is here necessite in that one and in that other: for in ỳ one is necessyte of syttyng, and certes in that other is necessyte of soth. But therfore ne sytteth nat a wyghte, for that the opynyon of the syttynge is sothe, but the opynyon is rather soth for that a wight sitteth before. And thus al though that the cause of the soth cometh of that other syde, as who sayth, that although the cause of sothe cometh of the syttynge, and nat

not of the trewe opinió, algates yet is there a cómune neceſſite in that one & in that other.
Thus ſeweth it, that I may make ſemblable ſkyles of ꝑ purueyaunce of god, and of thynges to comen. For all thoughe ꝑ for that thynges ben to cómé, therfore ben they purueyed, and not certes for they ben purueyed, therfore ne betyde they nat, natheleſſe it behoueth by neceſſyte, ꝑ eyther the thynges ꝑ to comé ben ypurueyed of god, or els that the thynges ꝑ ben purueyed of God betyden. And this thynges onely ſuffyſeth ynoughe to deſtroyen the fredom of our arbytre, that is to ſayn, of oure fre wyll. But certes nowe ſhewerth it wel how ferre fro the ſoth, & howe vp ſo down is thys thynge, that we ſeye that the betydyng of temporal thinges is cauſe of ꝑ eterne preſcience. But for to wenen ꝑ god purueyeth the thynges to comen, for they beue to comen. What other thyng is it but for to wene, that thylke thinges ꝑ betyde whilom, ben cauſes of thilke ſouerayne purueyaunce that is in god. And here to adde I yet this thynges, that right as whá that I wote that a thyng is, it behoueth bynecéſſyte that thilke ſelfe thyng be, and eke whan I haue knowen that anye thynge ſhall betyden ſo behoueth it by neceſſyte that thilke ſame thynges betyde. So foloweth it than, that the betydyng of ꝑ thinges ywyll before ne may nat be eſchued, and at the laſte, if that any wight wene a thig to ben otherwiſe than it is, it nys nat onely diſceite, but it is deceyuable opinion, full dyuers and ferre fro the loth of ſcience. Wherfore if any thing be ſo to comen that the betydynge of it ne be not certeyne ne neceſſary, who may weten before ꝑ thilke thinge is to comen. For right as ſcience ne may nat be medled wyth falſneſſe, as who ſayth, that if I wote a thyng, it ne may nat be falſe ꝑ I ne wote it, right of thilke thing that is conceyued by ſcience, ne maye not be none otherwyſe than as it is conceyued, for that is the cauſe why that ſcience wanteth leſing, as who ſayth, why that weteyng ne receyueth nat leſynge of that it wote, for it behoueth by neceſſyte that euery thyng be right, as ſcience cómprehendeth it to be. What ſhal I than ſayn, in which maner knoweth god before al ꝑ thynges to comen, if theyne be nat certeyne, for yf that he deme, ꝑ they ben to comen vneſchuably, and ſo may be that it is poſſyble ꝑ they ne ſhullen not comen, god is deceyued, but nat onely to trowen that god is deceyued, but for to ſpeke it with mouth, it is a felonous ſynne. But if that god wote, that right ſo as thinges bene to comen, ſo ſhullen they comen, ſo that he wot egally, as who ſayth indifferétly, that thinges may be done, or els nat ydone. What is thilke preſcience that ne comprehendeth no certeine thing ne ſtable, or els what difference is there betwene the preſcience of thilke tape worthy deuynour of Cicile deuynour, that ſayd. Al that I ſay quod he eyther it ſhal be, or els it ne ſhall nat be, or els howe moche is worth the deuyne preſcience more than the opynyon of mankynde, yf ſo be that it demeth the thynges vncertayne as men done. Of the whiche domes of men, the betydynge nys nat certeyne. But if ſo be, ꝑ none vncertayne thynges ne may ben in him, that is righte certeyne wel of al thynges, than is ꝑ betydyng certeyne of thilke thinges, which that he hath wyll before fermely to comen, for which it foloweth that the fredom of the counſayls & of the werkes of mánkynde nys none, ſyth ꝑ the thought of god that ſeeth al thinges without errour of falſneſſe, byndeth and conſtreyneth hem to a betydynge by neceſſyte. And if thys thyng be ones ygraunted and receyued, this is to ſayn, that there nys no fre wil, than ſeeſt it wel how great deſtruccyon & howe greate domages there folowen of thynges of mánkynde, for in ydel ben there than purpoſed and behyghte medes to good folke and payne to bad folke, ſythe that no mouynge of fre courage is voluntary, ne hath not deſerued hem, that is to ſayn neyther mede ne payn. And it ſhuld ſeme than that thilke thing is alderworſt, which that is nowe demed for aldermoſt riht & moſt trouthfull. That is to ſayne, ꝑ thewes bene purpoſhed, or els that good folke be ygretthoned, ꝑ whiche folkes ſen that her propre wil ne ſtreyneth hem to that one, ne to that other. That is to ſayn, neyther to good ne harme, but conſtreyneth hem certeyn neceſſite of thinges to comé, than ne ſhullen there neuer ben ne neuer weren byre ne vertue, but it ſhullen rather be confuſyon of all deſertes medled without diſcreeyon. And yet there foloweth another inconuenience, of ꝑ which there ne may be thought no more felonous ne more wycked, and that is thus, that ſo as the ordre of thinges is vied & cometh of the purueyaunce of god, ne that nothyng nys lefull to the counſayls of mankinde, as who ſayth, ꝑ men haue no power to don nothig ne wyl nothig, than foloweth it ꝑ

out vices ben referred to ꝑ maker of al good, as who sayth, thā foloweth it ꝑ god ought to haue the blame of our vices, syth he constrayneth vs by necessyte to done vyces, than nys there no reason to hoopen in god ne to prayen to god, for what shulde any wyght hoopen to god, or why shulde he prayen to god, sith that the ordenaunce of destyne, which that ne may nat ben enclyned, knytteth & streyneth al thynges that men may desyren. Than shulde there be don away thylke onely alyaunce bytwene god and man, that is to sayn, to hopen and to prayen. But by the pryte of right wysnesse & of very mekenesse, we deseruen ꝑ guerdon of diuyne grace, which that is inestymable, that is to say, that is so great that it ne may not be ful prayed, & this is only ꝑ maner, that is to say, hope & prayers. For which it semeth that men wol speke with god, and by reson of supplycacion bene comoyned to thylke clernesse, that nys nat approched no rather or that men seken it and impetren it. And if men ne were nat ꝑ hope ne prayers, ne haue no strengthes by the negligence of thinges to comen retenued, what thinges is ther than, by which we mowe ben cōioyned & retorned to thilke souerayn prier of thinges. For which it behoueth by necessite that the lygnage of mankynde, as thou songe a lytel here beforn, be departed and vnioyned from his wele, and fayten of his begynnynge, that is to sayne god.

Que nam discors federa rerum, Causa resolut: quis tam a deus: &c.

What discordable cause hath to rente and vnioyne the bynding or the alyaunce of thynges, that is to sayne, the conuencyons of god and of man: which god hath establisshed so greate baratte bytwene these two forbisade or verye thinges, that is to sayn, bytwene the puruyaunce of god and fre wyl, that ben synguler & deuided, ne that they ne wolde nat ben medled ne coupled togider. But there nis no discorde to the very thynges, but they clenen alwaye certayne to hem selfe. But the thought of mā confounded & ouerthrowen by the darke mēbres of ꝑ body, ne may nat by fyre of his darked lokyng, that is to sayn, by the bigour of his insight, while ꝑ soule is in ꝑ body, knowe the thyn subtel knyttynges of thynges. But wherfore eschaufeth it so by so great loue, to fynden thylke notes of soth yconered, that is to sayne, wherfore eschaufeth the thought of man by so great desyre, to knowe thilke notifications that ben yhyd vnder the couertures of soth: wote it ought thilke thiges that it an gyrshous desyreth to knowe: As who saith nay. For no man ne trauayleth for to weten thiges ꝑ he wote. And therfore ꝑ prete sayth thus. But who trauayleth to weten thynges yknowe: and if that he ne knoweth hem nat, what seketh thilk blynde thought: what is he ꝑ desyreth any thiges, of which he wot right naught: As who sayth, who so desyreth any thynges, nedes somwhat he knoweth of it, or els he ne coude nat desyre it. Or who may folowe thynges that ne ben nat yknowe, & though that he seke the thynges, where shall he fynde hem: what wyght that is al vncomyng and ygnorant mayt knowe ꝑ for me ꝑ is yfonde. But whan the soule beholdeth & seeth the hye thought, ꝑ is to sayne god, thā knoweth it togyder the some & singularites, that is to sam, the principles, & euerych of hem by hem selfe. But now whyle the soule is hyd in the cloude & in the darknesse of the mēbres of the body, it ne hath not all forveten it selfe, but it withholdeth the summe of thynges, and lefyth the synguarites. Than who so that seketh sothnesse, he nys in neyther nother habyte, for he wot not all, ne he ne hath nat all forveten, but yet hym remembreth the some of thiges that he withholdeth, and asketh counsayle, and retreateth depych thinges yseene before, that is to sayne, the great some in his mynde, so that he mowe adden the parties that he hath forveten to thilke parties that he hath withholden.

Tum illa. Ille inquit, hec est de prouidencia querela: Quam cum Tullio &c.

Than said she, this is quod she the olde questyon of the puruyaunce of god. And Marcus Tullius whan he deuyded the deuinacions, that is to sayne, in his bookes that he wrate of deuinacios, he moued greatly this question, & thy selfe hast ythought it moch, & vtterly and long, but yet ne hath it nat be determined ne tsped fermely & diligently of any of you, & the cause of this darknes & of this difficulteis for that

that the moūynge of the reason of mankynde ne maye not moeuen to, that is to sayn applien or ioynen to the simplicite of ỳ diuine presey-ence, the which simplicite of the diuine presci-ence, if ỳ wē myghten thynkē it in any maner. That is to sayne, ỳ yf men myghten thynke and cōprehēden the thynges ỳ god seeth hym self, than there dwelled verely no doute, ỳ which reason and cause of dyffycultees, I shall assaye at last to shewe and to speden whan I haue first ysponded and answered to thy resons, by which thou art moued, for I aske why thou weneſt ỳ thylke resons of hem ỳ assoyle thys questiō ne bee nat spedfull ynoughe ne suffreyent, the whiche solucyon or the whiche reason, for that it demeth, that the prescience is not of ne cessyte of thynges to come, as who sayth, any other way than thus, but that thilke thinges that the prescience wote before, ne may not vnbeyden, that is to sayne, that they moten beryde. But than, if that prescience ne putteth none necessyte to thynges to comen, as thou thy self hast confessed it and beknowe a lite bere before, what cause or what is it, as who sayethe, there may no cause be, by whyche that the endes voluntary of thynges myghten be costrayned to certayn berdyng. For by grace of poysyon, so that thou mayst the better vn-derstande this that foloweth, I suppose that there ne be no prescience: Thā aske I qd the) has muche as apertayneth to that, shulden than thynges that comen of free wyll be con-strayned to berydyng by necessyte? So. Haye (quod I) Wot. Than auenwarde qd the I suppose that there be prescience, but that it ne putteth no necessyte to thynges, than trow I that thylke same fredome of wyl shal dwelle all hole and absolute, and vnbounden. But thou wylte sayne, that all be it so that presey-ence nys not cause of the necessite of berydyng to thynges to comen, algates yet it is a signe that the thynges ben to beryden by necessyte. By this maner than although ỳ presience had fayle be, yet algates or at lest way, it is certē thing that endes of berdinges of thiges to co-men shulden be necessarye. For euery thynge shewyth and signifieth onely what the thynge is, but it ne maketh not the thyng that it sig-nifieth. For whiche it behoueth fyrst to shewe that nothyng ne berydeth, that it ne berydeth by necessite: so that it may apere that the pre-science is signe of necessite: or els if there were no necessyte, certes thilke presciēce ne might not be signe of thing that nys not. But certes it is nowe certayne, that ỳ proue of thys yfli-eyned by stedfast reason, ne shal not ben lad ne proued by sygnes ne by argumentes take fro without, but by causes couenable and ne-cessarye. But thou mayst sayne, howe maye it be that the thynges ne beryden not, that be purueyed to comen? But certes right as we trowen that the thynges, whith that be pur-ueyaunce wote before, to comen ne be not to beryden. But that ne shoulde we not deme, but rather although they shall beryden, yet ne haue they no necessite of hir kynde to berdem: and this mayste thou lyghtly aperceyuen by thys that I shall sayne. For we sene many thynges vnbē ther ben before our eyen right as men sene the carter wrothyng in the toute-nyng and in the attempryng of a dyelling of his carres or charioles, and by this maner, as who sayethe, mayste thou vnderstande of all other werkemen. Is there thā any necessite, as who sayth in our lokyng, that constrayneth or com-pelleth any of thylke thynges to ben done for? Nay (quod I) for in hir dede and in hem-selfe were al the effecte of crafte, ỳ hem all thinges weren moued by constrayninge of eyen eyen or of our syght. Philos. The thynges than (quod he) that whan that men done hem, ne haue no necessyte that men done hem ne the same thinges first or they be done, ther ben to comen without necessyte: for whe there ben some thynges to beryden, of whom the endes and the berydinges of hem ben absolute and quite of all necessyte. For certes I ne thenke not that any man wolde sayne this, that the thynges ỳ men done nowe, that they ne were to beryden first, er they were done. And thilke same thynges, although men hadden wille hem before, yet they haue the berdinges. For right as science of thinges present ne bringeth in no necessite to thynges that men don, right so to the prescience of thynges to comen, ne bringeth in none necessite to thinges to bery-den. But thou mayst sayn, that of thilke same it is doubted, as whether that of thilke thyn-ges, that ne haue none endes and berydinges necessaryes, ỳ therof may ben any presience. For certes they semen to discorden, for thou weneſt that yf that thynges ben sene before that necessyte folowyth hem, and yf necessyte fayleth hem, they ne must not ben wist before, and that nothyng may be comprehended by scyence but certayn. And if the thynges ne haue

no certayn bretdiges, be putueyed as certayn it shulde be derkenesse of opinion, not sothfastnesse of scyence. And thou wenest ỳ it be diuers fro ỳ holynesse of science, that any man shulde deme a thing to be otherwise than it is it self, and the cause of this errour is, that of al the thynges, that euery wyght hath knowe, they wene that the thynges ben knowe only by ỳ strengthe & by the nature of the thynges that ben wyst or knowe, and it is al the contrary: for al that euer is knowe, it is rather comprehended and know, nat after his strength and his nature, but after the faculyte, that is to sayne, the power and the nature of hem that knowen. And for that this thynge shuld now shewe by a shorte ensample the roundnesse of a bodye, otherwyse than the syght of the eye knoweth it, & otherwyse than the touchynge. The lokyng, by castyng of his beames, wayteth & seeth from a ferre al ỳ bodye togyther, without mouyng of it selfe, but the touchyng cleaueth to the rounde bodye, and moueth about the enuyronnynge, and comprehendeth the parties by roundenesse, and the man hym selfe otherwyse beholdeth him, & otherwayes ymaginacyon, and otherwyse reason, & otherwyse intelligence: for the wytte comprehendeth without forth the figure of the body of man, that is vnlabyrshed in the mater subiecte. But the ymagynacyon comprehendeth only the figure without the mater. Reson surmounteth ymagynacion, and comprehendeth by vniuersal lokynge the cõmune speche, but the eye of intelligẽce is higher, for it surmoũteth the enuyronnyng of the vniuersyte, & loketh ouer that, by pure subtylite of thought. Thylke same symple fourme of man, that is perdurable in the diuyne thought, in whyche this ought greatly to be considred, ỳ the hiest strength for to comprehenden thinges, embraceth and contrayneth the lower strengthe, but the lower strength ne atteyneth not in no maner to the hyer strengthe. For wytte ne may comprehẽde nothyng out of mater, ne ỳ imaginacion ne loketh not the vniuersal speces, ne reason ne taketh not the symple fourme, so as intelligence taketh it. But intelligence that loketh al abouen, when it hath comprehẽded ỳ fourme, it knoweth & demeth all the thynges that ben vnder ỳ forme, but she knoweth hem in thylke maner, in whyche it comprehendeth thylke same symple forme, that ne may neuer be knowen of none of ỳ other, that is to saye, to none of the thre forsayde strengthes of the soule, for it knoweth the vniuersyte of reason and the figure of ymagination, & the sensible material cõceyued by wit, ne it ne vseth not ne of reason, ne of ymagynacyon, ne of wytte without forth, but it beholdeth al thinges, so as I shall say, by a stroke of thought formely without discours of collation. Certes reason whã it loketh any thyng vniuersal, it ne vseth not of ymagination ne witte, and algates yet it comprehendeth the thynges ymaginable & sensyble, for reason is she that defineth the vniuersal of her conceyte ryght thus. Man is a resonable two footed beest, and howe so that this knowynge is vniuersal, yet ays there no wight that ne wot wel that a man is a thing ymaginable and sensyble, and this same considereth wel reason, but that ays nat by ymagynacyon, nor by wyt, but it loketh it by resonable conception. Also ymagynacion, al be it so that it taketh of wytte the begynning, to sene & formen the figures, algates although that wytte ne were not present, yet it enuyronneth & comprehendeth al thinges sẽsible, not by reason sensyble of demyng, but by reason ymagynatife. Seest thou not than that al the thynges in knowing vsen more of her faculte or of her power, than they done of the faculte or power of thinges that ben to knowen, ne ỳ is no wrõg, for so as euery iugemẽt is ỹ dede or doynge of hym, that demeth, it behoueth ỳ euery wight performe his werke & his entẽcion not of forain power, but of his propre power.

Quondam porticus attulit. Obscuros nimium scnes. &c.

Than the porche, that is to sayne, a gate of the town of Athenes, there as philosophers hadde congregacyon to dyspute, thylke porche brought somtyme olde men full derke in her sentences, that is to saye philosophers, that hyghten stoiciens, that wende that ymages & sensibilites, ỳ is to say, sẽsible ymaginacions or elis ymaginations of sensible thinges, were empryted in to soules fro bodies wourforth, as who sayth, thylke stoiciens wenden ỳ the soule had be naked of him selfe, as a mirrour or a cleane perchemyne, so that all figures musten fulle comen fro thynges fro without in to soules, and ben empryned in to soules

ryght

ryght as we ben wonte somtyme by a swifte poyntel to fire letters emprinted in ꝑ smothnesse or in the playnesse of the table of ware, or in the parchemyne, that hath no fygure ne note in it. Glose. But nowe argueth Boece agaynste that opynion, and sayth thus. But if the thinyng soule ne vnplyteth nothynge, that is to sayne, ne doth thyng by his propre mouyng, but suffreth and lyeth subiect to the figures and to the notes of bodyes without forth, & yeldeth ymages ydell, yeuel & vayne, in the maner of a myrroure. Whence thinketh than or whēce cometh thilke knowing in our soule, that discerneth and beholdeth al thynges, and whence is thilke strength that beholdeth the synguler thynges, or els whence is ꝑ strength that deuideth thynges yknowe, and thilke strength that gathereth togyther thynges deuided, and strength that choseth the enchaūged way: For somtyme it heaueth the heed, that is to say, that it heaueth vp the entencion to ryght hygh thynges, and somtyme it discendeth in to right lowe thynges, & whā it retourneth in to hym selfe, it reproueth and distroyeth the false thynges by the true thinges. Certes this strength is cause more effycient and muche more myghty, to sene and to knowen thynges, than thilke cause that suffreth and receyueth the notes and figures imprinted in maner of matter. Algates the passyon, that is to say, the suffraunce or the wit in the quicke body gothe before entrynge, & moūting the strēgthes of the thought, right so as whan that clereneſſe smyteth the eyen, & moueth hē to sene, or tryght so as voyce or sown hurleth to the eeres, & cōmoueth hem to herken, than is the strengthe of the thought moued & excited, clepeth forth to semblable mouinges the speces that it halte within it selfe, and addeth the speces to the noottes, and to thinges without forth, and medleth the ymages of thinges without forth, to thynges hyd within hym selfe.

Quod si in corporibus sentiendis quamuis efficiant instrumenta sensuum. &c.

But what is that in bodyes to be felyd, that is to say, in the takyng & in the knowyng of bodily thynges. And all be it so that the qualytees of bodyes ꝑ be obiecte fro without forth, mouen & entalenten the instrumentes of the wittes, and al be it so that the passyon of the bodye, that is to sayne, the wyt or the suffraunce goeth before the strēgth or the worchynge corage, the whiche passyon or suffraūce clepeth forth the dede of ꝑ thought in it self, and moueth & excyteth in this meane whyle, ꝑ fourmes that resten within forth, & insēsible bodies, as I haue sayd our corages nys not taught or empruted by passion to know these thiges, but demeth & knoweth of his owne strength ꝑ passion or suffraūce subiect to the body: moch more than the thynges ben absolute and quicke fro al talentes or affeccyons of bodyes, as god or hys angels ne folowen not in discerning thinges entere fro without forthe, but ther accomplysshen and speden the dedes of her thought. By this reason than there comen manye maner of knowynges to dyuers and to differynge substances. For the witte of the body, the whiche is naked and dispoſed of al other knowynge, thylke witte cōmeth to beestes the whiche mowen not mouen hem selfe here and there, as oysters and muskels, and other such beestes of the see, that cleuen & ben nourished to rockes, but the ymaginacyon cōmeth to nuable beestes, that semen to haue talent to flyen or to desyren any thynge. But reason is alonelye the lyuage of mankynde. Ryght as intellygence is alonely the deuine nature of whiche it folowyth, that thilke knowynge is more worthe than is eyther, sens or ymaginacyon. Whan a man by his proper nature nat only his subiect, but who sayth, it ne knoweth not alonly that apperteyneth properly to hys knowynge, but it knoweth ꝑ subiectes of al other knowynges. But how shal it than be, ꝑ that witte & ymaginacyon stryuen aven resoynge, and sayne that of thylke vniuersall thynge that reason weneth to sene, that it nys ryght naught, for witte and ymaginacyon sayne, that that is sensyble or ymaginable, it ne may not ben vniuersall. Than is there eyther the iugement of reason sothe, ne that there nys nothyng sensyble, or els for that reson were wel, that many thynges ben subiecte to witte and to ymaginacyon: than is the conception of reson vayne and false, whiche that loketh and comprehendeth, that that is sensyble & synguler, as vniuersall. And yf that the reason wold answere ayeyn these two, that is to say, to witte and ymaginacyon, & saye that sothly she her selfe that is to sayn reason, loketh and comprehendeth

deth by reason of vniuersalite, both that that is sensible, and that that is ymagynable, and thylke two, that is to sayne, wytte & ymagynacyon, ne mowen not stretchen hem selfe to the knowyng of vniuersalyte, for that the knowyng of hem ne may not excedeu ne surmounten þ bodily tygures. Certes of the knowyng of thynges men oughten rather yeuen more credence to the more stedfaste and to the more perfyte iugemente in thys maner stryuynge, than we that haue strengthe of reasonyng and of ymagynacion, and of wytte, that is to say, by reason and by ymagynacion, we wolde rather prayse the cause of reson, as who sayth, than the cause of wytte and of ymagynacion. Semblable thyng is it, that the reson of mankynde ne weneth nat that the diuyne intelligence, beholdeth or knoweth thinges to come, but tyght as the reason of mankynde knoweth hem; for thou arguyst thus, that if that it ne seme not to men, that some thynges haue certayne betydinges, they ne may not be wytte before certaynly to betyden, and than is there no prescience of thylke thynges, & yt we trow that prescience be in these thinges, thã is there nothynge that betydeth by necessyte. But yf we myght haue the iugemente of the diuyne thought, as we ben partyners of reson, right so as we haue demed, þ it behoueth by ymagynacion and wytte, & beneth reason, tyght so wold we deme that it wer tyghtful thing, that mans reason ought to submyt it selfe to be beneth the diuine thought, for which if we may, as who sayth, that if we may I counsaile that we enhauce vs in the height of thilke soueraine intelligence, for ther þat reason wel sene that þ it ne may not beholde in it selfe, & certes that is thus, in what maner the prescience of god seeth althinges and byholdeth, al though they haue no certayne betydinges: ne this is none opinion, but rather the simplicite of the soueraine science, that is not shette with in no maner of boundes.

Quam bestiis terras animalia permeant figuris. Namq; alia erecto sunt corpore. &c.

The bestes passen by the erthes by ful diuers figures, for some of hẽ haue her bodyes straught, & creepen in the duste, & drawẽ after hem a trace or a forough continued, that is to saye, as neders & snayles, and other bestes, by the wandring lightnesse of her wynges beatẽ the windes, & ouer swimmen the spaces of þ longe ayre, by moste flyeng. And other bestes gladen hem selfe, to byggen her traces or her steppes in the erthe with her goyeng or with her fete, and to gone eyther by the greue feldes, or els to walkẽ vnder the woodes. And al if be so that thou seest that they discorden by diuers fourmes, algates her faces enclyned beauyeth her dul wittes, onely the lynage of man beaueth byghest his hie heed, & stadeth right with his vpright body, & beholdeth the erthes vnder him. And but if thou erthly man wayest yuel out of thy wytte, this figure amonesteth, the that aresest the heuẽ with thy right visage, & hast areysed thy forheed to beaten vp on hygh thy corage, so þ thy thought ne be not heuyed ne put low vnder fote, syth þ thy body is so high areised.

Quoniam igitur vti paulo ante monstratũ est, omne quod scitur. &c.

Therfore thã, as I haue shewed a litel here before, þ al thyng that is wyste nys not knowen by his nature propre, but by the nature of hem that cõprehenden it. Let vs loken nowe, in as muche as it is lefull to vs, as who sayth, let vs loken nowe as we may, which þ is the estate of þ diuine substaũce, so þ we may wel knowe eke what his sciẽce is.

The cõmune iugement of al creatures reasonables thã is, that god is eterne. Let vs cõsyder than what is eternyte, for certes þ shewen vs togyder the diuine nature and the diuyne science. Eternite than is perfyte possessyon, and al togyther of lyfe interminable, and that the werth the more clerely by the comparyson or collacyon of temporall thynges. For al thyng that liueth in tyme, it is present, and procedeth fro preteritres into futures, þ is to sayne, from tyme passed in to tyme comynge: ne there nys nothynge stably set in tyme, that may enbracen togyder al the space of thys life, for certes yet ne hath it not taken the time of to morowe, and it hath lost that of yester daye. And certes in the life of thys day, ye ne lyuen no more, but right as in this moueable and transitorie moment. Than thylke thynge that suffreth temporall condicion, all though þ it neuer began to be, ne though it neuer cease to be as Aristoteles demed of þ worlde, and although þ lyfe of it be stretched with infynite of tyme, yet algates nys it no

suche thynge, as men wight trowen by right that it is eterne. For al thoughe that it comprehende and embrace the space of the life infinite, yet algates ne embraseth it not ꝑ space of the lyfe al togyther, for it ne hathe not the futures that be not yet: Ne it ne hath no lenger the preterites ꝑ ben done or passed. But thilke thyng than, that hath and comprehendeth togyder al the plente of the life interminable, to whom there ne fayleth nought of the future, & to whom there nys naught of ꝑ preterite escaped or passed, thilke same is ywitnessed and proued by right to ben eterne. And it behoueth by necessyte that thilke thyng be alway presente to him self, and competent, as who sayth, alway present to him selfe, and so mighty, that al be right at hys plesaunce, and that he haue al present ꝑ infynite of the mouable tyme. Wherfore some men trowen wrongfullye, that whan they heren that it semed to plato, that this world had neuer begynning of tyme, that it neuer shal haue fayling: they wene in thilke maner, that this worlde be maked eterne, w hys maker, as who sayth, they wene that this worlde and god be maked together eterne. And ꝑ is a wrongfull wenyng, for other thing it is to be ladde by the lyfe interminable, as plato graũted to the worlde, and other thinge it is to embrace togyther, al the presence of the lyfe that is interminable, which thynge is clere and manifest to the byholdyng thought. Ne it ne shulde not seme to vs that god is elder than thinges that bẽ maked by quantite of time, but rather by the proprete of hys symple nature. For thys ylke infynite mouynges of tẽporal thynges foloweth this presentary estate of this life immouable, and so as it ne may ne coũtrefeten ne fayne it, ne be euenlyke to it for the immobilyte, ꝑ is to saye, that is in the eternyte of god, & fayleth & fayleth in to mouyng fro the simplicite of the presẽce of god, & diffenereaseth in the infenite quãtite of future and preterite. And so as it may ne haue togyder al the plentye of the lyfe, algates yet for as much as it ceaseth neuer for to ben in some maner, yet it semeth somdele to vs, that it foloweth & resembleth thylke thyng, that it ne may not attayne to ne fulfyllen, and bindeth it selfe to some maner presence of this lytel moment: the which presence of thys lytell and swyfte moment, for ꝑ it beareth a maner vmage or lykenesse of the aye dwellyng of god: it graũteth to suche maner thynges, as it betydeth to, that it semeth hem, as these thynges haue ben, and ben. And for that the presence of suche lytel moment ne may not dwell, therfore it rauyshed and toke thinfynite waye of tyme. ꝑ is to saye, by succession, and by thys maner it is done, or that it shuld continue the lyfe in going of ꝑ what the lyfe it ne might not embrace the plente of dwellyng. And for thy if we wollen put worthy names to thynges ꝑ folowen plato, let vs saye than forthire, that god is eterne, and ꝑ the worlde is perpetuel. Than for the euerlygement knoweth & comprehendeth by his owne nature, thynges that ben subiecte to hym, there is to god alwayes an eterne and a presentarye estate. And the sentence of him that ouerpasseth all temporall mouyng, dwelleth in symplicite of hys presence, and enbraseth and considereth all the infynite spaces of tymes preterites, and of tymes futures, And loketh in hys symple knowynge al thynges of preterite, right as they were don presently right nowe. If thou wolt than thenken & aduise the prescience, by whiche it knoweth al thinges, thou ne shalt not demen it as prescience of thinges to comen, but thou shalt denien more rightfully that is science of presence or of instaunce that neuer ne fayleth, for whiche it nys not reputed purueyance, but it shuld rather be cleped purueyaunce, that is established fulferre fro right low thinges, & beholdeth from a ferre al thinges, right as it were fro the bye bryge of thinges. Why than, or why disputest thou than, that thilke thinges ben don by necessite, to the that ben vsene & knowen by the diuine syght, sith ꝑ forsoth menne maken nat thilke thinges necessary, whiche that they see ben ydon in her syght, for addeth thy beholdynge any necessite to thilke thinges which thou beholdest present? Noe. Nay, quod I. Certes qd she than, yf men mighten make any digne comparison or collacion of the presence dyuyne, and of the presence of mankinde: right so as we sene some thinges in this temporal presence, right so seeth god al thing by his eterne presence. Wherfore this diuine presidence ne chaungeth not the nature of the properte of thinges, but beholdeth suche thinges present to him warde, as they shulden be ydemed to vs warde in tyme to comen. Ne it ne confoundeth not the iugement of thynges, but by one syght of hys thought he knoweth

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the thinges to comen, as wel necessary as not necessarye. Right so whan ye sene togyther a man walke on the erthe, and the sonne aryseth in the heuen, al be it so that ye sene al togither that one and that other: yet neuertheles ye demen and discernen, that that one is voluntary, and that other is necessary: Right so than the diuine lokynge, beholding al thynges vnder hym, ne troubleth nat the qualite of thinges that ben certeynly present to hym warde, but as to the condicion of tyme, forsoth they ben future, for whiche it foloweth, ý this was none opynyon, but rather a stedfaste knowyng ý strengthed by sothnesse, that whan ý god knoweth any thynge to be, he ne vnwote nat that thilke thyng wanteth necessite to be, this is to sayn, that whan that god knoweth any thing to betyde, he wote wel ý it ne hath no necessyte to betyde. And yf thou seyst here that thilk thing that god seeth to betyde, it ne may nat vnbetyde, as who sayth he it wote betyde, and thilke thynge that ne may nat vnbetyde, it moste betyden by necessite, I that thou streyne me to this name of the necessite. Certes I wol wel confessen and beknowen a thynge of ful sad trouthe, but vnneth shal there any wight mowe sene it or come thereto, but if ý he be beholder of ý diuine thought, for I wil answere the thus, that thilke thing that is future, whén it is referred to ý diuine knowing, than it is necessarye. But certes whan it is considered vnto his owne kynde, men sene it vtterly free and absolute fro al necessyte. For certes there ben two maners of necessites, that one necessyte is simple, as thus, ý it behoueth by necessite that al men be mortal or feeble. Another necessyte is condycyonel, as thus, yf thou woost that a mã walketh, it behoueth by necessyte that he walke. thilke thing than that any wight hath yknowe to be, it ne may nat be none otherwyse than he knoweth it to be. But this condicion ne draweth not with her thilke necessyte simple, for certes this necessite condicionel, the propre nature of it ne maketh it nat, but the adiection of the condycyon maketh it. For no necessyte ne constrayneth a mã to gon, that goth by his proper wil, al be it so that whan he goth, that it is necessary that he goth. Right on this same maner than, yf that the purueyaunce of god seeth any thyng present, than more thylke thyng ben by necessyte, al thoughe that it ne haue no necessyte of hys owne nature. But certes the futures that betyden by fredom of arbitrie, god seeth hem al togyder present. These thinges than if they be referred to the dyuine sight, thã ben they maked necessarye by the condicion of the dyuyne knowyng. But certes, yf thylke thynges ben consydred by hem selfe, they been absolute of necessyte, and ne foleten not, ne cesten not of the lyberte of her owne nature. Than certes without dout al the thinges shullen ben don, which that god wote before that they ben to comen and betyden of fre arbitrie, or of free wyll, that al be it so that they betyden, yet algates ne lese they not her proper nature in beynge, by the whiche first or they weren done, they hadden power not to haue betydde. So. What is thys to sayne than qõ I that thynges ne be not necessary by her proper nature, so that they comé in al her maners in the likenesse of necessyte, by condicion of the diuine science? Philo. This is the difference qõ he that the thynges whiche ý I purposed the a lytel here before, that is to sayne, sounea rysynge, and the man walkynge, ý ther whyles ý thylke thynges ben done, they ne myght not ben vndoone. Natheles that one of hem or it was done, it behoueth by necessite that it was doone, but not that other. Right so is here that the thinges whiche ý god hath present, withouten doute they shullen ben, but some of hem discendeth of the nature of thynges, as the sonne arysynge, and some discendeth of the power of the doers, as the manne walkynge. Boece. Than sayd I, no wronge, that if these thinges be referred to the diuine knowynge, than ben they necessarye, and yf they ben considred by hem selfe, than ben they absolute fro the bonde of necessyte. Right so as al thynges that apereth or sheweth to the wittes, if thou refere hem to reason it is vniuersal, and if thou loke it or refer it to it selfe, than is it singuler. But nowe if thou saydest thus, that if that it be in my power to chaunge my purpose, than shal I vnbeben the purueyaunce of god, whan peraventure I shall haue chaunged the thynges whiche ý he knoweth before. Philo. Than shall I answeren thus: Certes thou maiste wel chaunge thy purpose, but for as moche as the presentnesse of the diuine purueyaunce beholdeth that thou mayste chaunge thy purpose, and whether thou chaunge it or no, and ý whyderward that thou tourne it, thou ne mayde not eschue the dyuine presetence: right so thou ne mayste

not

not by the syght of the present eye, although that thou tourne thy selfe by thy fre wyll in to diuers actions. But thou mayste sayne ayen to this thus: Howe shall it than be, that not þ diuyne science ben chaunged by my dyspoy-cion, whan that I wyll one thyng nowe, and nowe another thyng. And thilke prescience ne semeth it not to entrechaunge soudes of know wynge, as who sayth, ne shal it not semen to vs, that the diuine prescience entrechaungeth his diuers soundes of knowynge, so that it knowe somtyme one thynge, and somtyme it knoweth the contrary of that thynge. Philo. Aforsothe quod she, for the dyuyne syght vmbeth before and seeth all the futures, and reperth hem ayen, and retourneth hem to the propre prescience of his propre knowyng, ne he entrechaungeth not, so as thou weenest the soundes of his foreknowyng, as nowe this, nowe that: but he dwellynge aye cometh before, and embraseth at o stroke all the muta-cions. And thys prescience to comprehenden and to sene al thinges, god ne hath not taken it of the bery dinges of thynges to comen, but of his propre symplicite. And herby is also-lyed thilke thiges that thou putteth a lite here before, that is to sayne, that it is vnworthy thyng to sayn that our futures yeuen cause of the prescience of God. For certes strength of the diuyne science, whiche that embraseth al thinges by his presentary knowyng, stablis-seth maner to all thynges, and it ne oweth not to latter thynges. And sithe þ these thyn-ges ben thus, that is to saine, that necessite is not in thynges by the dyuyne prescience, than is there fredom of arbytrie that dwelleth hole and be wemmed to mortal men, ne the lawes ne ponrposen not wycked medes and paynes to the wyllinges of men, that ben vnbounden and quite of all necessyte: And God beholder and forewetter of al thynges dwelleth aboue, and the prescute eternite of syght, remeth al-ware wyth the dyuers qualyte of our bedes, dispensyng or ordeynyng medes to good me, and tourmétes to wicked men. Ne in ydell ne in vayne ne ben there not put in god hope and prayers, that ne mowen not ben vnspedeful, ne without effecte, whan they ben rightfull.

Withstande than and eschewe thou vices, worthyppe and loue thou vertues, areyse thy corage to ryghtfull hopes, yelde thou humble prayers and byghe. Greate necessyte of pro-uesse and of vertue is encharged and com-maunded to you if ye wyll not dissimulen, forth that ye worchen and doone, that is to sayne, your bedes and youre werkes before þ eyen of the iuge, that seeth and also that demeth al thynges. Deo gracias.

¶ Thus endeth the boke of Boecius of the consolacion of Philosophie, and hereafter folowyth the dreame of Chaucer.

¶ The dreame of Chaucer

I haue greate wonder be this lyght
Howe I lyue, for pardee
wyght
I make not slepe, what
nought
I haue so many an ydle thought
Purely for defaute of slepe
That by my trouth, I take no kepe
Of nothyng, howe it cometh or goethe
Ne me-nys nothyng left nor lothe
All is lyche good to me
Ioye or sorowe, where so it be
For I haue felynge in nothyng
But as it were a mased thyng
Alway in poynte to falle adoun
For sorowfull ymagination
Is alway wholy in my mynde
And wel ye wote agaynst kynde
It were to lyuen in this wyse
For nature wolde not suffyse
To noneerthly creature
Not longe tyme to endure
Without slepe, and be in sorowe
And I no may, ne nyght ne morowe
Slepe, and this melancolye
And dredé I haue for to dye
Defaute of slepe and heuynesse
Hath slayne my spirite of quickenesse
That I haue lost all lustyhed
Suche fantasyes ben in myne heed
So I not what is best to do
But men might aske me why so
I may not slepe, and what me is

But natheles, who aske this
Leseth his asking trewly
My seluen can not tel why
The sothe, but trewly as I gesse
I holde it be a sykenesse
That I haue suffred this eyght yere
And yet my boote is neuer the nere
For there is phisycien but one
That may me heale, but that is done
Passe we ouer vntyl efte
That wyl not be, more nedes be lefte
Our first matter is good to kepe
So whan I sawe I might not slepe
Tyl now late, this other nyght
Upon my bedde I sate vpright
And bade one teche me a booke
A Romaunce, and he it me toke
To rede, and driue the nyght away
For me thought it better play
Than play eyther at Chesse or tables
And in this boke were wryten fables
That clerkes had in olde tyme
And other poetes, put in tyme
To rede, and for to be in mynde
While men loued the lawe of kynde
This boke me spake, but of suche thynges
Of quenes lyues, and of kynges
And many other thynges smale
Among al this I fonde a tale
That me thought a wonder thyng.
This was the tale: There was a kyng
That hyght Seys, and had a wife
The best that myght beare lyfe
And this quene hyght Alcyone
So it befyl, thereafter sone
This kyng wol wenden ouer see
To tellen shortly, whan that he
Was in the see, thus in this wyse
Suche a tempest gan to ryse
That brake her maste, and made it fal
And clefte her shyp, and dreynt hem al
That neuer was founde, as it telles
Borde ne man, ne nothyng elles
Right thus this kyng Seys lost his lyfe
Nowe for to speke of Alcyone his wife
This lady that was lefte at home
Hath wonder, that the kynge ne come
Home, for it was a longe terme
Anon her herte began to yerne
And for that her thought euermo
It was not wele, her thought so
She longed so after the kyng
That certes it were a pytous thyng
To tel her hertely sorowful lyfe
That she had, this noble wyfe
For him alas, she loued alderbest
Anon she sent both erst and west
To seke him, but they founde nought
Alas (quod she) that I was wrought
And where my lorde my loue be deed
Certes I nyl neuer eate breed
I make a vowe to my god here
But I mowe of my lorde here
Suche sorowe this lady to her toke
That trewly, I that made this boke
Had suche pyte, and suche routhe
To rede her sorowe, that by my trouthe
I farde the worse al the morowe
After to thynken on her sorowe
So whan this lady coude here no worde
That no man myght fynde her lorde
Ful ofte she swowned, and sayde alas
For sorow, ful nygh woode she was
Ne she coude no rede but one
But downe on knees she sate anone
And wepte, that pyte was to here
A mercy swete lady dere
(Quod she) to Juno her goddesse
Helpe me out of this distresse
And yeue me grace my lorde to se
Soone, or wete where so he be
Or howe he fareth, or in what wyse
And I shal make you sacrifyse
And holly yours become I shall
With good wyll, body, herte and all
And but thou wolte this, lady swete
Sende me grace to slepe and mete
In my slepe some certayne sweuen
Where through that I may knowe euen
Whether my lorde be quicke or deed
With that word she hynge downe the heed
And fel in a swoune, as colde as stone
Her women caught her vp anone
And brought her in bed al naked
And she for weped and for waked
Was wery, and thus the deed slepe
Fell on her, or she toke kepe
Through Juno, that had herde her boone
That made her to slepe soone
For as she prayde, right so was don
In bede, for Juno right anon
Called thus her messangere
To do her erande, and he comenere
Whan he was come, she bad him thus
Go bet quod Juno to Morpheus
Thou knowest him wel, the god of slepe

Nowe

Nowe vnderstande wel, and take kepe
Say thus on my halfe, that he
Go fast in to the great see
And byd him that on al thynge
Be take vp Seys body the kynge
That lyeth ful pale, and nothynge tody
Syd him crepe in to the body
And do it gone to Alcyone
The quene, there she lyeth alone
And shewe her shortely it is no nay
Nowe it was dreynt this other day
And do the body speke right so
Right as it was wonted to do
The whyles that it was alyue
Gonowe fast, and hye the blyue.
This messanger toke leue and wente
Upon his way, and neuer he stente
Tyl he came to the barke baley
That stante betwene rockes twey
There neuer yet grewe corne ne gras
Ne tree, ne naught that ought was
Fruit ne man, ne nought elles
Saue that there were a fewe welles
Came rennyng fro the clyffes adowne
That made a deedly slepynge sowne
And rennen downe ryght by a caue
That was vnder a rocke ygraue
Amyd the baley wonder depe
There thelf goddes lay a slepe
Morpheus and Ecimpasteyze
That was the god of slepes heyre
That slepte, and dyd none other werke
This caue was also as derke
As hel pytte, ouer al aboute
They had goodly ser for to route
To hye who myght slepe best
Some hynge her chynne vpon her brest
And slepte vpright her heed vhed
And some lay naked in her bed
And slepte whyles they dares last
This messanger come rennyng fast
And cryed ho ho, awake anone
It was for naught, there herde him none
Awake quod he who lyeth there
And blew e his horne right in her eere
And cryed awaketh wonder hye
This god of slepe, with his one eye
Cast vp, and asked who clepeth there
Is am I quod this messangere
Juno bade thou shuldest gone
And tolde him what he shuld done
As I haue tolde you here before
It is no nede rehersen it more
And wente his way whan he had sayde
Anone this god of slepe abrayde
Out of his slepe and gan to go
And dyd as he had bydde him do
Toke vp the deed body soone
And bare it forth to Alcyone
His wyfe the quene, there as she lay
Right euen a quarter before day
And stode right at her bedes fete
And called her right as she shete
By name, and sayd Sys my swete wyfe
Awake, let be your sorowful lyfe
For in your sorow, there lyth no rede
For certes swete loue, I am but dede
Ye shal me neuer on lyue se
But good swete herte that ye
Bury my body, for such a tyde
Ye mowe it fynde, the see beyde
And fare wel swete, my worldes blysse
I pray god your sorowe lisse
To lyue wel while our blysse lasteth
With that her eyen vp she casteth
And saw naught, alas quod she
And dyed within the thyrde moneth
But what she sayd more in that sweuen
I may nat tel you as nowe
It were to longe for to dwel
My first matere I wol you tel
Wherfore I haue tolde this thynge
Of Alcyone, and Seys the kynge
For thus moche dare I say wel
I had be dolue euerydel
And deed, right through defaute of slepe
Yf I ne had red, and take kepe
Of this tale nerre before
And I wil tel you wherfore
For I ne myght for bote ne bale
Slepe, or I had redde this tale
Of this dreynte Seys the kynge
And of the goddes of slepynge
Whan I had red this tale wele
And ouerloked it euerydele
Me thought wonder, if it were so
For I had neuer herde spoke or tho
Of no goddes, that coude make
Men to slepe, ne for to wake
For I ne knewe neuer god but one
And in my game, I sayd anone
And yet me lyst, right euel to play
Rather than that I shulde dey
Through defaute of slepynge thus
I wolde gyue thylke Morpheus
Or that goddesse dame Juno

Or some wyght els, I ne rought who
To make me slepe, and haue some rest
I wyl gyue him the aldher best
Yefte, that euer he abode his lyue
And here onwarde, right nowe as blyue
Yf he wol make me slepe a lyte
Of downe of pure dowues whyte
I wol yeue him a ferther bed
Rayed with gold, and right wel cled
In fyne blacke Satryn doutremere
And many a pylowe, and euery bere
Of clothe of raynes to slepe on softe
Nym there not nede to toutne ofte
And I wol yeue him al that falles
To his chambre and to his halles
I wol do paynte with pure golde
And tapyte hem ful many folde
Of one sute thys shall he haue
Yf I wyste where were his caue
Yf he can make me slepe sone
As dyd the goddesse, quene Alcione
And thus this vlke god Morpheus
May wynne of me mo fees thus
Than euer he wanne, and to Juno
That is his goddesse, I shall so do
I trowe that she shall holde her payde.
I had vnneth that worde ysayde
Right thus as I haue tolde you
That sodeynly I nyst howe
Suche a lust anone me toke
To slepe, that right vpon my boke
I fel a slepe, and therwith euen
Me mette so wly suche a sweuen
So wonderfull, that neuer yet
I trowe no man had the wyt
To conne wel the sweuen rede
No nought Joseph without drede
Of Egypte, he that rad so
The kynges mettynge Pharao
No more than coude the lest of vs
Ne nat scarsly Macrobeus
He that wrote al the auysyon
That he met kynge Scipion
The noble man the African
Suche meruayles forrimed than
I trowe a rede my dremes euen
Lo thus it was, this was my sweuen.
Me thought thus, that it was May
And in the dawnyng there I lay
Me met thus in my bed al naked
And loked forthe, for I was waked
With smale foules a great hepe
That had afrayed me out of my slepe
Through noyse, and swetnesse of her songe
And as me met, they sate amonge
Vpon my chambre rofe without
Vpon the tyles ouer al about
And eueryche songe in his wyse
The moste solempne seruyse
By note, that euer man I trowe
Had herde, for some of hem songe lowe
Some hygh, and al of one accorde
To tel shortly at o worde
Was neuer herde so swete steuen
But it had be a thynge of heuen
So mery a sowne, so swete entunes
That certes for the towne of Tewnes
I nolde, but I had herde hem synge
For al my chambre gan to ryng
Through syngyng of her ermony
For instrument, nor melody
Was no where herde, yet halfe so swete
Nor of acorde halfe so mete
For there was none of hem that fayned
To synge, for eche of hem him payned
To fynde out many crafty notes
They ne spared nat her throtes
And forth to fayne, my chambre was
Ful wel depaynted, and with glas
Were al the wyndowes, wel yglased
Ful clere, and nat an hole yerased
That to beholde it was great ioy
For holy al the story of Troy
Was in the glasynge ywrought thus
Of Hector, and of kynge Priamus
Of Achylles, and of kynge Lamedon
And eke of Medea, and of Jason
Of Paris, Heleyne, and of Lauyne
And all the walles with colours fyne
Were payntc, both verte and glose
And al the Romaunce of the rose
My wyndowes weren shyt echone
And through the glasse the sunne shone
Vpon my bed with bryght bemes
With many glad gredy stremes
And eke the welkyn was so fayre
Blewe, bryght, clere was the ayre
And ful attempre, for sothe it was
For neyther to colde, ne hote it nas
Ne in all the welkyn was no clowde
And as I lay thus wonder lowde
Me thought I herde an hunte blowe
To assay his great horne, and for to knowe
Whether it was clere, or horse of sowne
And I herde goynge both vp and downe
Men, horse, houndes, and other thynge
And

And al men spoke of huntynge
How they wold slee the harte with strength
And howe the harte had vpon length
So moche enbosed, I not no more what
Anon ryght whan I herde that
How that they wolde, on huntynge gone
I was ryght glad, and vp anone
Toke my horse, and forth I wente
Out of my chambre, I never stynte
Tyl I come to the felde without
There other toke I a great rout
Of hunters, and eke of foresters
And many relayes and lymers
And hred hem to the forest fast
And I with hem, so at the last
I asked one lad, a lymere
Say felowe, whom shal we hunte here
Quod I and he answered anon
Syr, the Emperour Octouyen
Quod he, and is here fast by
I godde's halfe, in good tyme (quod I)
Go we fast, and gan to ryde
Thanne we come to the forest syde
Every man dyd ryght soone
As to huntynge fel to doone
The maister hunte, anone fote hote
With his horne blewe three mote
I the vncouplynge of his houndes
Within a while, the harte founde is
Thalowed, and rechased fast
Longe tyme, and so at the last
This harte rouled and blase away
Fro al the houndes a pieuy way
The houndes had ouer shot him al
And were vpon a defaulte yfal
Therwith the hont wonder fast
Blewe a forloyn at the laste
I was go walked fro my tree
And as I went, there came by me
A whelpe, that fawned me as I stoode
That had vfolowed, and coude no goode
It came and crepte to me as lowe
Right as it had me yknowe
Smale doune his heed, and loyned his eeres
And layde al flat the doune his heeres
I wolde haue caught it anone
It fled, and was fro me gone
And I him folowed, and it forth went
Doune by a floury grene it went
Ful thycke of grasse, ful softe and swete
With flowres fele, faire vnder fete
And yet vled it semed thus
For both the Flora, and zepherus
They two, that make flowres growe
Had made hir dwellyng there I trowe
For it was on to beholde
As though the erthe enuye wolde
To be gayer than the heuen
To haue mo flowres, suche seuen
As in the welken steren be
It had forget the pourtre
That Winter, through his colde moysture
Had made it suffre, and his sorowes
All was forveten, and that was sene
For all the woode was woxen grene
Swetnesse of dewe, had made it waxe
It is no nede eke for to axe
Whether there were many grene greues
Of thycke of trees, so ful of leues
And every tree stode by hym selue
Fro other, wel ten foote or twelue
So great trees, so huge of strength
Of foure or fyue fadom length
Clene without bowe or spryse
With croppes brode, and eke as thycke
They were not an vnche a sonder
That it was shadde ouer all vnder
And many an hart, and many an hinde
Was both before me, and behynde
Of fawnes, sowers, buckes, does
Ful was the wodde, and many roes
And many squyrrels, that sete
Ful hyghe vpon the trees and ete
And in her maner made festes
Now syr, it was ful of bestes
That though Argus, the noble countour
Sate to reken in his countour
And reken with his figures ten
Yet by the figures nevermore shuld he
Vf they be crafty, reken and nombre
And tel of every thyng the nombre
Yet shulde he fayle to reken euen
The wonders me met in my sweuen
But forthe I romed, right wonder faste
Doune the woode, so at the laste
I was ware of a man in blacke
That sate, and had vturned his backe
To an ooke, an huge tree
Lorde thought I, who may that be
That eyleth him to sytten here
Anon right, I went nere
Than founde I syttc, euen vpright
A wonder welfarynge knyght
By the manere me thought so
Of good moode, and right yonge therto
Of the age of foure and twenty yere

Upon his herde, but lytel herte
And he was clothed al in blacke
I stalked euen vnto his backe
And there I stode, as styll as ought
The sothe to say, he saw me nought
For why he hynge his heed adowne
And with a deedly, sorowfull sowne
He made of ryme, ten verses or twelue
Of a complaynte, to him selue
The moste pyte, the most routhe
That euer I herde, for by my trouthe
It was great wonder that nature
Wyght sustre any creature
To haue such sorow, and he not deed
Ful pyteous pale, and nothyng reed
He sayd a lay, a maner songe
Without note, without songe
And was this, for ful wel I can
Reherse it, right thus it began
I haue of sorowe so great wone
That ioye get I neuer none
Nowe that I se my lady bright
Whiche I haue loued, with all my myght
Is fro me deed, and is agone
And thus in sorowe, lefte me alone
Alas deth, what eyleth the
That thou noldest haue taken me
Whan that thou toke my lady swete
Of al goodnes, the had none mete
That was so fayre, so freshe, so fre
So good, that men may wel se
Whanne he had made thus his complaynte
His sorowful hert, gan fast fayntе
And his spirites were dede
The bloode was dedde, for pure drede
Down to his herte, to maken him warme
For wel it feled the herte had harme
To wete eke, why it was adradde
By kynde, and for to make it gladde
For it is membre principal
Of the body, and that made al
His hewe chaunge, and were grene
And pale, for there no bloode is sene
In no maner lymme of his
Anon therwith, whan I sawe this
He farde thus wel, there he sete
I went and stode right at his fete
And grette him, but he spake nought
But argued with his owne thought
And in his wytte, disputed faste
Why, and howe his lyfe might laste
Him thought his sorowes were so smerte
And lay so colde vpon his herte
So through his sorowe, and holy thought
Made hym that he herde me nought
For he had welnye lost his mynde
Though Pan, that men clepeth god of kynde
Were for his sorowes neuer so wrothe
But at the last, to sayne ryght sothe
He was ware of me, howe I stoode
Before him, and dyd of my hoode
And had ygret him, as I best coude
Debonayrly, and nothyng loude
He sayd, I pray the be not wrothe
I herde the not, to sayne the sothe
Ne I sawe the not, sir trewly
Ah good sir, no force (quod I)
I am right sory, if I haue ought
Distroubled you, out of your thought
Forgeue me, if I haue myssе take
Yes, thamendes is lyght to make
(Quod he) for there lythe none therto
There is nothyng missayde, nor do
Lo howe goodly spake this knight
As it had be a wyght wyght
And made it nether tough ne queynt
And I sawe that, and gan me aqueynt
With him, and founde him so tretable
Right wonder skylful, and reasonable
As me thought, for all his bale
Anon right, I gan fynde a tale
To hym, to loke where I might ought
Haue more knowlegyng of his thought
Sir (quod I) this game is done
I holde that this hert be gone
These huntes can him no where se
I dono force therof (quod he)
Why thought is therone neuer a dele
By our lorde (quod I) I trowe you wele
Right so me thynketh by your chere
But sir, o thyng wolde I here
Me thynketh in great sorowe I fonde
But certes sir, if that ye
Wolde aught discure me your wo
I wolde, as wyse god helpe me so
Amende it, if I can or may
Ye mowe proue it by assay
For by my trouthe, to make you hole
I wol do al my power hole
And telleth me, of your sorowes smerte
Paraunter it may ease your herte
That semeth ful seeke vnder your syde
With that he loked on me a syde
As who say the nay, that nyl not be
Graunt mercy good frende (quod he)
I thanke the, that thou woldest so

But

But it may neuer the rather be do
No man may my sorowe glade
That maketh my hewe to fal and fade
And hath myn vnderstandyng lome
That me is wo, that I was borne
Pay nought make my sorowes slyde
Not al the remedies of Ouyde
Ne Orpheus, god of melodye
Ne Dedalus, with hys playes slye
Ne heale me, may no physicien
Nought Ipocras, ne Galyen
Me is wo, that I lyue houres twelue
But who so wol assaye hym selue
Whether his hert can haue pyte
Of any sorowe, let hym se me
I wretche, that dethe hath made al naked
Of al the blisse that euer was maked
I wrothe, werste of al wyghtes
That hate my dayes, and my nyghtes
My lyfe, my lustes, be me lothe
For al fare and I be wrothe
The pure deth is so ful my foe
That I wolde dye, it wyl not soe
For whan I folowe it, it wyl flye
I wolde haue him, it nyl not me
This is payne without reed
Alway dyenge and be not deed
That Tesyphus that lyeth in hel
Pay not of more sorowe tel
And who so wylle al, by my trouthe
Pe sorowe, but he hadde routhe
And pyte of my sorowes smerte
That man hath a fendely herte
For who so seeth me fyrst on morowe
Pay sayne he hath mette with sorowe
For I am sorowe, and sorowe is I
Alas and I wyl tel the why
My sorowe is tourned to playnyng
And al my laughter to wepyng
My glad thoughtes, to heuyneſſe
Intrauayle is myn ydleneſſe
And eke my reſt, my wele is wo
My good is harme, and euermo
Inwrathe is tourned my playeng
And my delyte into sorowyng
Pyn heale is turned into ſickeneſſe
Indrede is al my ſyckerneſſe
To dethe is turned al my lyght
My wytte is folye, my day is nyght
My loue is hate, my ſlepe waking
My myrth and mes, is ſaityng
My countenaunce is vyrete
And al abawed, where so I be
By peace pledyng, and in werre
Alas, nowe myght I fare werre
My boldeneſſe is turned to ſhame
For falſe fortune, hath played a game
At the cheſſe with me, alas the whyle
The traytereſſe falſe, and ful of gyle
That al behoteth, and nothyng halte
She gothe vpryght, and yet ſhe halte
That baggeth foule, and loketh fayre
The diſpytous debonayre
That ſcorneth many a creature
An ydole of falſe portrayture
Is ſhe, for ſhe wol ſone wryen
She is the monſtres heed vpryen
As fykle, ouer vſtrowed with floures
Her moſte worſhyp and her floures
To lyen, for that is her nature
Without fayth, lawe, or meſure
She falſe is, and euer laughyng
With one eye, and that other wepyng
That is brought vp, ſhe ſet al downe
I liken her to the Scorpione
That is a falſe flatteryng beeſt
For with his heed he maketh feeſt
But al amyd his flatteryng
With his tayle he wyl ſtynge
And enuenym, and ſo wyl ſhe
She is the ymrous chartre
That is ay falſe, and femeth wele
So turneth she her falſe whele
Aboute, for it is nothyng ſtable
Nowe by the fyre, nowe at table
Ful many one hath ſhe thus vblent
She is playe of enchaunrement
That femeth one, and is not ſo
The falſe theefe, what hath he do
Trowest thou, by our lorde I wyl the ſay
At the Cheſſe with me ſhe gan to play
With her falſe draughtes ful deuers
She ſtale on me, and toke my fers
And whan I ſawe my fers away
Alas, I couthe no longer play
But ſayd, farewel ſweete yuus
And farewel al that euer there is
Thus with fortune ſaſh, cheke here
And mate in the myd poynt of the cheſſere
With a pawne errant, alas
Ful crafterly to play ſhe was
Than Atalus that made the game
Firſt of the Cheſſe, ſo was his name
But god wolde I had ones or twyſe
Conde, and knowne the leaperdiſe
That conde the Grecke Pithagores

I shulde haue playde the bet at ches
And kept my feers the bet therby
And though wherto, for tre wly
I holde that wyche not worthe a stre
It had be neuer the bet for me
For fortune can so many a wyle
Ther be but fewe can her begyle
And eke she is the lasse to blame
By selfe I wolde haue do the same
Before god, had I ben as she
She ought the more excused be
For this I say, yet more therto
Had I be god, and myght haue do
By wyl, whan she my feers caught
I wolde haue drawe the same draught
For al so wyse, god gyue me reste
I dare wel sure, she toke the beste
But throughe that draught I haue lorne
My blysse, alas that I was borne
For euermore I trowe trewely
For al my wyl, my luste holly
Is turned, but ye, what to done
By our lorde it is to dye sone
For nothynge I leaue it nought
But lyue and dye, right in thys thought
For there nys planet in firmamente
Ne in ayre ne in erthe none elemente
That they ne yeue me a yefte echone
Of wepyng whan I am alone
For whan that I aduyse me wele
And berthynke me euerydele
How that there lieth in rekenynge
In my sorowe for nothynge
And howe there lyueth no gladnesse
May gladde me of my distresse
And howe I haue loste suffysaunce
And therto I haue no pleasaunce
Than may I say, I haue right nought
And whan al this falleth in my thought
Alas, than am I ouercome
For that is done, is not come
I haue more sorowe than Tantale
And I herde hym tel thys tale
Thus pytously, as I you tell
Vnneth myght I longer dwell
It dyd myn herte so muche wo
I good sir quod I say nat so
Haue some pyte on your nature
That fourmed you to creature
Remembreth you of Socrates
For he ne counteth not thre strees
Of nought that fortune coude do
No quod I I can not so
Why good sir, yes parde quod I
Ne say not so, for truely
Though ye had loste the feerses twelue
And ye for sorowe murdred your selue
Ye shulde be dampned in this case
Ry as good right as Medea was
That slough her children for Jason
And Phillis also, for Demophon
Hynge her selfe, so wela way
For he had broke his terme day
To come to her: Another rage
Had Dido, the quene eke of Cartage
That sloughe her selfe, for Eneas
Was false, whiche a foole she was
And Ecquo dyed, for Narcisus
Nolde nat loue her, and right thus
Hath many another foly done
And for Dalida dyed Sampsone
That sloughe hym selfe with a pilere
But there is no man alyue here
Nolde for her feers make this wo
Why so quod he it is not so
Thou wotest ful lyte what thou menest
I haue loste more than thou wenest
Howe may that be quod I
Good sir, tel me al holly
In what wise, howe, why, and wherfore
That ye haue thus your blisse lore
Blythely quod he come sit doun
I tel the vpon a condicioun
That thou shalte holly with al thy wyt
Do thyne entente to herken it
Yes sir: Swete thy trouthe therto
Gladly do than holde here to
I shal right blythely, so god me saue
Holly with al the witte I haue
Here you as wel as I can
A goddes halfe quod he and began
Sir quod he syth firste I couthe
Haue any maner witte fro youthe
Or kindely vnderstandinge
To comprehende in any thynge
What loue was, in myne owne wyt
Dredeleste I haue euer yet
Be tributary, and yeue rente
To loue holly, with good entente
And through pleasaunce become his thral
With good wyl, body, herte and al
Al thys I put in hys seruage
As to my lorde, and dyd homage
And ful deuoutly I prayde hym tho
He shulde beset myne herte so
That it pleasaunce to hym were

And

And wurthip to my lady dere
And this was longe, and many a yere
Er that myn herte was set o where
That I dyd thus, and nyte why
I trowe it came me kyndely
Paraunter I was therto moste able
Is a whyte wal, or a table
For it is redy to catche and take
Al that men wyl therin make
Whether so men wyl portrey or paynte
Or the werkes neuer so quaynte.
And thylke tyme I fared tyght so
I was able to haue lerned tho
And to haue conde, as wel or better
Paraunter, either dite or letter
But for loue came fyrst in my thought
Therfore I forgate it nought
Ichees loue to my fyrst crafte
Therfore it is with me lafte
For why, I toke it of so yonge age
That malice hadde my corage
Nor that tyme, turned to nothyng
Though to mokel knowlegyng
For that tyme, youth my mayſtreſſe
Gouerned me in delyteſſe
For it was in my fyrſt youthe
And tho ful lytel good I couthe
For al my werkes were flytyng
That tyme, and al my thought varieng
Al were to me ylche goode
That knewe I tho, but thus it ſtode.
Ithapped that I came on a day
Into a place, there that I ſey
Trewly the fayreſt companye
Of ladies, that euer man with eye
Had ſene togythers in o place
Shal I clepe it happe, either grace
That brought me there, not but fortune
That is to lyen ful comune
The falſe traytereſſe peruerſe
God wolde I couthe clepe her werſe
For nowe ſhe worcheth me ful wo
And I wol tel ſone why ſo.
Amonges theſe ladies thus echone
Sothe to ſayne, I ſawe one
That was lyke none of the route
For I dare ſwere, without doute
That as the ſomers ſonne bryght
Is fayrer, clerer, and hath more lyght
Than any other planet in heuen
The moone, or the ſterres ſeuen
For al the worlde ſo had ſhe
Surmounted bothal of beaute
Of maner, and of comlyneſſe
Of ſtature, and of wel ſet gladeneſſe
Of goodly heed, and ſo wel beſey
Shortly, what ſhal I more ſey
By god and by hys holom eſt twelue
It was my ſwete, right al her ſelue
Shee had ſo ſtedfaſt countenaunce
So noble porte, and mayntenaunce
And Loue, that wel hadde my bone
Had eſpred me thus ſone
That the ful ſone in my thought
As helpe me god, ſo was I cought
So ſodaynly, that I ne toke
No maner counſayle, but at her loke
And at myn herte, for why her eyen
So gladly I trowe man herte ſyrne
That purely tho, myn owne thought
Sayd it were better ſyrne her for nought
Than with another to be wele
And it was ſothe, for euery dele
I wyll anone right tel the why
I ſawe her daunce ſo comely
Carol and ſyng ſo ſwetely
Laugh and play ſo womanly
And loke ſo debonarely
So goodly ſpeke and ſo freſhely
That certes I trowe that euermore
Was ſene ſo blyſful a treſore
For euery heer on her heed
Sothe to ſay it was not reed
Ne neither yelowe ne brouwn it was
Me thought moſte lyke goldeu wyre
And whyche eyen my lady had
Debonaire, good, glad and ſad
Symple, of good mokel, not to wyde
Therto her loke was not aſyde
Ne ouerthwart, but beſet ſo wele
It drewe and toke vp euery dele
Al that outher gan beholde
Her eyen ſemed anone the wolde
Haue mercy, folke wenden ſo
But it was neuer the rather do
It nas no counterfeted thynge
It was her owne pure lokyng
That the goddeſſe dame Nature
Had made hem open by meaſure
And cloſe, for were ſhe neuer ſo glad
Her lokyng was not folyſhe ſprad
Ne wyldely, though that ſhe playde
But euer me thought her eyen ſayde
Be god my wrathe is al forgyue
Therwith her lyke ſo wel to lyue
That dulneſſe was of her a dradde

She nas to sobre ne to glad
In al thinges more measure
Had neuer I trowe creature
But many one with her loke she herte
And that sate her ful lytel at herte
For she knewe nothynge of her thought
But whether she knewe, or knewe it nought
Algate she ne wrought of hem a stre
To get her loue ne nere nas he
That woned at home, than he in Inde
The formest was alway behynde
But good folke ouer al other
She loued, as man may his brother
Of whiche loue she was wonder large
In skylful places that bere charge
But whiche a vysage had she therto
Alas my herte is wonder wo
That I ne can discriue it
My lacketh both Englische and wit
For to endyte it at the full
And eke my spirites ben so dull
So great a chynge for to deuyse
I haue not wit that can suffyse
To comprehende her beaute
But thus muche I dare sayne that she
Was whyte, rody, fresche, and lyuely hewed
And euery day her beaute newed
And nyghe her face was alderbelle
For certes nature had suche lelle
To make that fayre, that trewely she
Was her chefe patron of beaute
And chefe ensample of al her werke
And mouelte, for bett neuer to derke
Pygmaleon I se her euer mo
And yet more ouer, though al tho
That euer lyued, were now e a lyue
Ne wolde haue founde to discryue
In al her face, a wicked signe
For it was sad, symple and benigne
And suche a goodly swete spede
Had that swete, my lyues lede
So frendely, and so wel grounded
Upon al reason, so wel ystounded
And so retable to al good
That I dare swere wel by the rood
Of eloquence was neuer founde
So swete a sownyng facounde
Ne trewer tonged, ne scorned lasse
Ne her coude heale: That by the masse
I durste sweare, though the Pope it longe
That ther was neuer yet, through her tonge
Wanne woman greatly harmyd
As for her, was al harme hyd
Ne lasse flatteryng in her worde
That purely her symple recorde
Was founde as trewe as any bonde
Or trouthe, of any mannes honde
Ne chyde she coulde neuer a dele
That knoweth al the worlde ful wele
But suche a fayrenesse of a necke
Had that swete, that bone nor brecke
Was there none sene, that misse satte
It was whyte, smothe, streight, a pure flatte
Without hole, or canel bone
And by semyng, she had none
Her throte, as I haue nowe memoire
Semed as a rounde tour of yuoire
Of good greatnesse, and not to grete
And fayre whyte she hete
That was my ladies name right
She was therto fayre and bright
She had not her name wronge
Right fayre sholders, and body longe
She had, and armes euer lyth
Fatty she fleshy, nat great therwith
Right white handes, and nayles rede
Rounde brestes: And of good brede
Her bryppes were, a streight flatte backe
I knewe on her none other lacke
That al her lymmes nere pure sewyng
In as ferre as I had knowyng.
Therto she coulde so wel playe
What that her lyste, that I dare saye
That was lyke to reioche bright
That euery man may take of light
Ynough, and it hath neuer the lesse
Of maner and of comlynesse
Right so farde my lady dere
For euery wight of her manere
Moght catche ynough, if that he wolde
Yf he had eyen her to beholde
For I dare sweare wel, if that she
Had amonge ten thousande be
She wolde haue be at the beste
Chefe myrroure of al the feste
Though they had stonde in a rowe
To mennes eyen, that coulde haue knowe
For where so men had plarde, or waked
Me thought the felouschypps as naked
Without her, that I sawe ones
As a crowne without stones
Trewly she was to myn eye
The soleyn fenix of Arabye
For there lyueth neuer but one
Ne suche as she ne knowe I none
To speke of goodnesse, trewly she

had as muche debonairte
As euer had Hester in the Bible
And more, if more were possible
And sothe to sayne, therwithal
She hadde a witte so general
So hole enclined to al goode
That al her witte was sette by the roode
Without malyce, vpon gladnesse
And therto I sawe neuer yet a lesse
harmful, than she was in doyng
I say not that she ne hadde knowyng
What harme was, or els she
Had couldе no good, so thinketh me
And trewly, for to speake of trouthe
But she had had, it had be routhe
Therof she had so muche her dele
And I dare sayne, and swere it wele
That trouthe hym selfe, ouer al and al
Had chose his maner principal
Inher, that was his resting place
Therto she had the moste grace
To haue stedfaste perseueraunce
And easy attempre gouernaunce
That euer I knewe, or wyste yet
So pure suffraunt was her wyt
And reason gladly she vnderstoode
It followed wel, she couldе goode
She vsed gladly to do wele
These were her maners euery dele
Therwith she loued so wel ryght
She wronge do wouldе to no wyght
No wight might do her no shame
She loued so wel her owne name
Her lust to holde no wight in honde
Ne be thou sikер, she wolde not fonde
To holde no wyght in balaunce
By halfe worde, ne by countenaunce
But if men wolde vpon her lye
Ne sende men in to Walakye
To Prusse, and to Tartarye
To Alisaundrie, ne in to Turkye
And bidde him fast, anon that he
Go hoodlesse in to the Depe see
And come home by the Carrenare
And sir, be nowe ryght ware
That I may of you here sayne
Worthippe, or that ye come agayne
She ne vsed no suche knackes smale
But therfore that I tel my tale
Right on this same, I haue sayde
Was holly al my loue layde
For certes she was that swete wyfe
My suffysaunce, my lyfe, my lyfe
Myn hope, myn heale, and al blesse
Thy worldes welfare, and my goddesse
And I holly hers, and euery dele
By our lorde quod I I trowe you wele
Hardly your loue was wel beset
I not howe it might haue be bet
Bet, ne not so wel quod he
I trowe sir quod I parde.
May leue it wel: Sir so do I
I leue you wel, that trewly
You thought that she was the best
And to beholde, the alderfayrest
Who so had loked her with your eyen
With myn, nay al that her seyen
Sayd and swore, it was so
And though they ne had, I wolde tho
Haue loued best my lady free
Though I had had al the beaute
That euer had Alcipiades
And al the strength of Hercules
And therto had the worthynesse
Of Alisaunder, and al the richesse
That euer was in Babilonne
In Carthage, or in Macedonne
Or in Rome, or in Almaine
And therto a so hardy be
As was Hector, so haue I ioye
That Achilles slough at Troye
And therfore was he slayne also
In a temple, for borbe two
Were slayne, he and Antilegius
And so sayth Dares Frigius
For loue of Polixena
Or ben as wise as Minerua
I wolde euer, without drede
Haue loued her, for I muste nede
Nede, nay trewly I gabbe nothe
Naught nede, and I wol tel you howe
For of good wyl men, here it wolde
And eke to loue her, I was holde
As for the fairest and the beste
She was as good, so haue I reste
As euer was Penelope of Grece
Or as the noble wyfe Lucrece
That was the beste, he telleth thus
The Romayne Titus Liuius
She was as good, and nothyng lyke
Though her lokes be autentyke
Algate she was as trewe as she
But wherfore that I tel the
Whan I first my lady sey
I was right yonge, sothe to say
And ful great nede I had to lerne

Whan

When myn herte wolde yerne
To loue it was a great empryse
But as my wytte wolde beste suffise
After my yonge chyldely wit
Without drede I beset it
To loue her in my beste wyse
To do her worshyp, and the seruyse
That I coude tho, by my trouthe
Without fayntng, eyther slouthe
For wonder fayne, I wolde her se
So moche it amended me
That whan I sawe her amorowe
I was warysshed of al my sorowe
Of al day after, tyl it were eue
Me thought no thynge might me greue
Were my sorowes neuer so smerte
And yet she syt so in myn herte
That by my trouthe, I nolde nought
For al thys worlde, out of my thought
Leaue my lady, no trewly
Now by my trouthe sir quod I
Me thynketh ye haue suche a chaunce
As hyre, without repentaunce
Repentaunce, nay fye quod he
Shulde I neuer repent me
To loue, nay certes than were I wel
Worse than was Achytofel
Or Antenor, so haue I ioye
The traytour that betrayed Troye
Or the false Grecion
Ne that purchased the treason
Of Rouland, and of Oliuere
Nay, whyle I am a lyue here
I nyl for her neuer mo
Nowe good sir quod I tho
Ye haue wel tolde me here before
It is no nede to reherse it more
How ye sawe her first, and where
But wolde ye tel me the maniere
To her, whiche was your first speche
Therof I wolde you beseche
And how she knewe first your thought
Whether ye loued her, or nought
And telleth me eke, what ye haue lore
I herde you tel here before
Ye sayde, thou nost what thou menest
I haue lost more than thou wenest
What losse is that quod I tho
Nyl she not loue you, is it so
Or haue ye ought bone amis
Or she hath lefe you is it this
Goddes loue tel me al
Fore god quod he and I shal
I say right as I haue sayde
On her was al my loue layde
And yet she wiste it not neuer a dele
Not longe tyme, leue it wele
For be tryght syker, I durst nought
For al this worlde, tel her my thought
Ne I wolde haue wrathed her trewly
For wost thou why, she was lady
Of the body that had the herte
And who so hath that may not asterte
But for to kepe me fro vilenesse
Trewly I dyd my busynesse
To make songes as I beste coude
And ofte tyme I songe hem loude
And made songes, this a great dele
Although I coude nat make so wele
Songes, ne knewe the arte al
As coude Lamekes sonne Tubal
That founde out first the arte of songe
For as his brothers hamers ronge
Vpon his anuelt vp and downe
Therof he toke the first sowne
But grekes sayne of Pithagoras
That he the first fynder was
Of the arte, Iuroza telleth so
But therof no force of hem two
Algates songes thus I made
Ne my feleyng, myn herte to glade
And lo this was al her first
I not where it were the werst
Lorde it maketh myn herte lyght
Whan I thynke on that swete wyght
That is so semely on to se
And wolde to god it myght so be
That she wolde holde me for her knyght
My lady, that is so fayre and bright
Now haue I tolde the, forth to say
My first songe vpon a day
I bethought me what wo
And sorowe me that I suffred tho
For her, and yet she wyste it nought
Ne tel her durst I not my thought
Alas thought I, I can no rede
And but I tel her, I am but dede
And if I tel her, so say right sothe
I am a traytre she wol be wrothe
Alas, what shal I than do
In this debate I was so wo
Me thought myne herte brast a twayne
So at the laste for the for to sayne
I bethought me that Nature
Ne formed neuer no creature
So muche beaute trewly

And

And bountie, without mercy
In hope of that, my tale I tolde
With sorowe, as that I neuer sholde
Formedes, and maugre myne herd
I must haue tolde her, or be deed
Nor wel howe that I began
But vnto reherce it I can
And eke as helpe me god withal
In rowe it was in the dismal
That was the ten woundes of Egypte
For many a worde I ouer skypte
In my tale for pure fere
Lest my wordes mysse set were
With sorowful herte, and woundes bede
Sette and quaking for pure drede
And shame, and dyntyng in my tale
For fere, and myne hewe al pale
Salofre I wexe bothe pale and red
Rewing to her I bynge the hed
I durst not ones loke her on
For vnkyndenesse, and al was gone
I sayd mercy, and no more
And rang no game, it sate me sore.
So at the laste, soothe to sayne
When that myne herte was come agayne
Color shortly al my speche
With hole herte, I gan her beseche
That she wolde be my lady swete
And swore, and hertely gan her hete
Euer to be stedfast and trewe
And loue her alway freshly newe
And neuer other lady haue
And all her worshyp for to saue
As I best coude, I swore her this
For sothe as al that euer there is
For euermore, myne herte swete
And neuer to false you, but I mete
Inyl, as wysse god helpe me so
And when I had my tale vdo
God wote she acompted not a lite
Of all my tale, so thought me
Color shortly, right as it is
Trewly her answere it was this
I can not nowe wel counterfete
Her wordes, but this was the grete
Effect answere, she sayd nay
Al brefely, alas that day
The sorowe I suffred and the wo
That trewly Cassandra, that so
Bewayled the distruction
Of Troye, and of Illyon
Had neuer suche sorowe as I tho
I durst no more say therto
For pure feare, but stale away
And thus I lyued ful many a day
That trewly I had no nede
Further than my bedes bede
Neuer a day to seche sorowe
I founde it redy euery morowe
For why, I loued her in no gere
So it befel another yere
I thought ones I wolde fonde
To do her knowe, and vnderstonde
Why wo, and she wel vnderstoode
That I ne wyned thyng but goode
And worshyp, and to kepe her name
Ouer al thynges, and drede her shame
And was so besy her to serue
And pryce were I shulde sterue
Sythe that I wyned none harme thus
So whan my lady knewe al this
My lady saue me al holly
The noble vertu of her mercy
Sauyng her worshyp by al manes
Dredeles, I mene none other wayes
And therwith she gaue me a ryng
I trowe it was the first thyng
But if myne hert was ywarre
Glad, that it is no nede to are
As helpe me god, I was as blyue
Reuyued, as fro dethe to lyue
Or al happes me alder best
The gladdest, and the most at rest
For certes wyly that swete wight
Al han I had wrongs, and he the right
She wolde alway so goodly
Forgeue me so debonairly
That my wounds, in a thaunce
She toke to her gouernaunce
Therwith she was alway so trewe
Our ioy was euer in the newe
Our hertes were so euen a payre
That neuer nas that one contrayre
To that other, for no wo
For sothe alyche they suffred tho
Alyche, and eke alsorowe bothe
Alyche they were bothe glad and wrothe
Al was vs one, without were
And thus we lyued ful many a yere
So wel, I can not tell howe.
Sir quod I where is she nowe
Nowe quod he and stynte anone
Therwith he wexe as deed as stone
And sayd, alas that I was borne
That was the losse, that here before
I tolde the, that I had lorne

Bethynke the howe I sayd here before
Thou woste ful lytel what thou menest
I haue lost more than thou wenest
God wot alas, ryght that was the
Alas sir how, what may that be
She is deed: Nay, Yes by my trouthe
Is that your losse, by god it is routhe.
And with that worde right anone
They gan to strake forth, al was done
For that tyme, the hart huntynge
With that me thought that this kynge
Gan homewarde for to ryde
Unto a place was there besyde
Which was from vs but a lyte
A longe castell with walles whyte
By saynte Johan, on a ryche hyl
As me mette, but thus it fyl
Right thus me mette, as I you tell
That in the castell there was a bel
As it had smytte houres twelue
Therwith I awoke my selue
And founde me lyenge in my bedde
And the boke that I had redde
Of Alcyone, and Seys the kyng
And of the goddes of slepyng
I founde it in myn honde ful euyn
Thought I, this is so queynt a sweuyn
That I wolde by processe of tyme
Fonde, to put this sweuen in tyme
As I can best, and that anone
This was my sweuen, nowe it is done.

Explicit.

MY maysters &c. Whan of Christ our kyng
Was asked, what is trouth or sothfastnesse
He not a worde answerde to that askyng
As who sayth, no man is all trewe I gesse
And therfore, though I hyght to expresse
The sorowe and wo that is in marryage
I dare not write of it no wykednesse
Lest I my selfe fal efte in suche dotage

I wol not saye howe that it is the chayne
Of Sathanas, on which he knaweth euer
But I dare sayne, were he out of his payne
As by his wyl, he wolde be bounden neuer
But thilke doted foole, that efte hath leuer
Ycharmed be, than out of prysons crepe
God let him neuer fro his wo discreuer
Ne no man him bewayle, though he wepe

But yet lesse thou do worse, take a wyfe
Bet is to wedde, than brenne in worse wyse
But & shalt haue sorow on thy flesh thy lyfe
And ben thy wyues thrale, as sain these wyse
And if that holy writte may not suffise
Experyence shal the teache, so may happe
Take the way leuer to be take in Fryse
Than efte to fal of weddyng in the trappe

This lytel writ, prouerbes or fygures
I sende you, take kepe of it I rede
Unwyse is he, that can no wele endure
If thou be syker, put the not in drede
The wyfe of Bathe, I pray you that ye rede
Of this matter, that we haue on honde
God graunt you your lyfe freely to lede
In fredome, for foule is to be bonde.

Explicit.

The assemble of Foules.

THe lyfe so short, the craft so long to lerne
Thassay so hard, so sharp the conquerring
The dredeful ioy, alway that flyt so yern
Al this meane I by loue, that my felyng
Astonyeth, with his wonderful werkyng
So sore I wis, that whan I on him thinke
Naught wote I wel, whether I flote or synke

For al be that I, knowe not loue in dede
Ne wot howe that he quyteth folke her hyre
Yet happeth me full ofte in bokes rede
Of his myracles, and of his cruel yre
There rede I wel, he wol be lorde and syre
I dare not saye, his strokes be sore
But god saue such a lord, I can no more

Of vsage, what for lust & what for lore
On bokes rede I ofte, as I you tolde
But wherfore I speke al this, naught yore
Agon, it happed me to beholde
Upon a boke, was ywritte with letters olde
And therupon, a certayne thyng to lerne
The long day, ful fast I radde and yerne

For

For out of the olde feldes, as men sayth
Cometh al this newe corne, fro yere to yere
And out of olde bokes, in good sayth
Cometh al this newe science, that men lere
But now to purpose, as of this matere
To rede forthe, it gan me so delyte
That al that day, me thought it but a lyte

This boke, of which I make mencyon
Entytled was right thus, as I shal tel
Tullius, of the dreame of Scipion
Chapiters seuen it had, of heuen and hel
And erthe, and soules that therin dwel
Of whiche, as shortly as I can it reherse
Of this sentence, I wol you sayne the reste

First telleth it, whan Scipion was come
In Affrike, howe he metyth Massynysse
That him for ioy, in armes hath ynome
Than telleth he her speche, and al the blysse
That was betwixe hem, tyl þ day gan mysse
And howe his auncestre Affrikan so dere
Gan in his slepe that nyght tyl him apere

Than telleth it, that from a sterry place
Howe Affrikan hath him Cartage shewed
And warned him before, of al his grace
And sayd him what man, lered eyther leude
That loueth comune profyte, wel ythewde
He shulde in to a blysful place wende
There as the ioye is without any ende

Than asked he, if folke that here ben dede
Haue lyfe, and dwellyng in another place
And Affrikan said ye, without any drede
And howe our present lyues space
Ment but a maner deth, what way we trace
And right ful folke, shul gon after they dye
To heuen, and shewed him the Galaxie

Than shewed he him, the lytell erthe þ here is
To regarde of the heuens quantyte
And after shewed he him the nyne speris
And after that the melodye herde he
That cometh of thilke speres thrise thre
That welles of musyke ben, and melodye
In this worlde here, and cause of armonye

Than sayd he him, sens erthe was so lyte
And ful of turment, and of harde grace
That he ne shulde him in this worlde delyte
Than tolde he him, in certayne yeres space
That euery sterre, shulde come into hys place
There it was first, and al shuld out of mynde
That in this worlde is done, of all mankynde

Than prayde him Scipion, to tel him al
The way to come in to that heuen blysse
And he sayde: first knowe thy selfe immortal
And loke aye besely, that thou werche a mysse
To comune profyte, and thou shalt not mysse
To come swyftly, into that place here
That ful of blysse is, and of soules clere

And brekers of the lawe, sothe to sayne
And lyckerous folke, after that they ben dede
Shul whirle about þ worlde, al way in payne
Tyl many a worlde be passed, out of drede
And than forgeuen all her wicked dede
Than shullen they come, to that blysful place
To which to comen, god sende the grace.

The day gan fasten, and the derke nyght
That reueth beestes from her besynesse
Berafte me my boke for lacke of syght
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse
Fulfylled of thought, and busy heuynesse
For both I had thyng, which that I nolde
And eke I ne had that thyng that I wolde

But fynally my spyrite at laste
For wery of my labour al that day
Toke rest, that made me to slepe faste
And in my slepe I mette, as that I lay
Howe Affrikan, right in the selfe aray
That Scipion him sayde, before that tyme
Was come, stode right at my bedde syde

The wery hunter, slepyng in his bedde
The woddes ayen his mynde goth anone
The fuge dremeth, how his pleys he spedde
The carter dremeth, how his cartes gone
The riche of gold, þ knight fyght with his fone
The sicke mette he drinketh of the tonne
The louer mette, he hath his lady wonne

Can I not sayne, if that the cause were
For I had radde of Affrikan before
That made me to mette that he stode there
But thus sayd he: thou hast the so well bore
In lokyng of myne olde boke al to fore
Of whiche Macrobie raught not a lyte
That somdele of thy labour wolde I quyte

Cytherea, thou blysful lady swete
That with thy fyre brande, dauntest whan þ lest

That madest me this swenen for to mete
Be thou my helpe in this, for thou mayst best
As wysely as I seygh the northe northe west
Whan I began my sweuen for to write
So yeue me myght, to ryme it and endyte

This forsayd Affrikan me hente anone
And forth with him to a gate brought
Right of a parke, walled with grene stone
And ouer ꝑ gate, with letters larg ywrought
There were verse ywritten, as me thought
On eyther halfe, of ful great difference
Of whiche I shal you say, the playn sentence

Through me men gon in to that blysful place
Of hertes heale, and deedly woũdes cure
Through me men gon into the wel of grace
There grene is ay, shal euer endure
This is the way to all good auenture
Be glad thou reder, and thy sorowe of cast
Al open am I, passe in and spede the fast

Through me mẽ gon, thã spake ꝑ other syde
Into the mortall strokes of the speere
Of whiche disdayne and daunger is the gyde
There neuer tree shall frute, ne leaues beere
This streme you lederh to ꝑ sorowfull weere
There as the fysshe in prison is al dreye
The eyre wyng is onely the remedye

These verses of gold & asure ywritte were
Of whiche I gan, astonyed to beholde
For with that one, encreased al my feare
And with that other gan my herte to bolde
That one me het, that other dyd me colde
No wyt had I, for errour for to chese
To entre or leye, or me to saue or lese

Right as betwene Adamantes two
Of euen weyght, a pece of yron set
Ne hath no might to moue to ne fro
For what that one may hale, that other let
So fated I, that I nyst where me was bet
To entre or leaue, tyl Affryean my gyde
Me hent and shoue in, at the gates wyde

And sayd, it standeth writtẽ in thy face
Thyne errour, thought thou tell it nat me
But drede the nat, to come in to this place
For this writyng is nothyng ment by the
Ne by none, but he loues seruaunt be
For thou of loue, hast lost thy rast I gesse
Is sycke man hath, of swete and bytternesse

But natheles, although thou be dul
That thou canst not do, yet mayste thou se
For many a man, that may nat stande a pul
Yet lyketh it him, at the wrestlyng for to be
And demeth yet, whether he do bet, or he
And if thou haddest comynge for tendyte
I shall the shewe matter of to wryte

And with that my hande in his he toke anone
Of which I comforte caught, & went in fast
But lorde so I was glad, and well begon
For ouer all, where I myne eyen cast
Were trees clad with leaues, ꝑ ay shal last
Eche in his kynde, with colour fresh & grene
As Emeraude, that ioye it was to sene

The bylder Oke, and eke the hardy Asshe
The pyller elme, the coffer vnto carayne
The bore pype tre, holme to whyppes lasshe
The saylynge fyre, the cipres deth to playne
The shoter ewe, the aspe for shaftes playne
The Olyue of peace, and eke ꝑ dronken vyne
The victor Palme, the laurer to dyuyne

A gardeyne sawe I, ful of blosomed bowis
Vpon a ryuer, in a grene mede
There as swetnesse, euermore ynough is
With floures whyte, blewe, yelowe, and rede
And colde well streames, nothynge dede
That swomen ful of smale fysshes lyght
With fynnes rede, and scales syluer bryght

On euery bough the bryddes herde I singe
With voyce of aungel, in her armonye
That busyed hem, her brydes forth to bringe
The lytel pretty conyes, to her play gan hy
And further al aboute, I gan espye
The dredful Roe, ꝑ bucke, the hart, & hynde
Squyrels, and bestes, smal of gentyl kynde

Of instrumentes, of stringes in accorde
Herde I so playe, a ravysshyng swetnesse
That god, that maker is of all and lorde
Ne herde neuer better, as I gesse
Therwith a wynde, vnneth it myght be lesse
Wade in the leues grene, a noyse softe
Accordant to the foules songe on lofte

The ayre of the place, so attempre was & colde
That neuer was there greuaũce of hote ne
There was eke euery holsome spyce & gras
Ne no man may there ware sicke ne olde
Ne hertes dele, ne nothyng that is solde
Yet was there more ioy a thousande folde

Than

That I can tel, or euer coude or myght
There is euer clere day, and neuer nyght

Under a tree, beside a wel I sey
Cupide our lorde, his arowes forge and fyle
And at his fete, his bowe al redy lay
And wel his doughter tempred al the whyle
The heedes in the wel, with her wyle
She couched hem after, as they shuld serue
Some to slee, and some to wounde and carue

Tho was I ware of Plesaunce anon right
And of aray, lust, beaute, and curtesy
And of the crafte, that can hath the myght
To done before, a wight to done foly
Dysfygured was she, I wyll nat lye
And by hym selfe, under an oke I gesse
Saw I Delyte, that stode with gentylnesse

Than saw I Beaute, with a nyce attyre
And youth, ful of game and iolyte
Folehardynesse, flatery, and desyre
Belagery, mede, and other thre
Her name shal nat here be rolde for me
And vpon pylers great of Jasper longe
I sawe a temple of Bras ifounded stronge

And aboute the temple, daunced alway
Women ynowe, of whiche some there were
Farre of hem selfe, and some of hem were gay
In kurtyls al disheueled went they there
That was theyr offyce euer, fro yere to yere
And on the temple, sawe I whyte and fayre
Of dowues sytting, many a thousand payre

And before the temple dore ful soberly
Dame Peace sat, a curteyne in her honde
And her besyde, wonder discretely
Dame Pacience, sytteynge there I fonde
With face pale, vpon an hyl of sonde
And alther nerre, within and without
Behest and Arte, and of her folke a route

Within the temple, of syghes hote as fyre
I herde a swough, that gan aboute renne
Whiche syghes were engendred with desyre
That made euery herte for to brenne
Of newe flambe, and wel espyed I then
That al the cause of sorowes, that they dyde
Come of the byttter goddes talousye

The god Priapus, sawe I as I went
Within the temple, in soueraync place stonde
In suche array, as whan the asse him hent
With eye by nyght, and with sceptre in honde
Ful busely men gan assay and fonde
Vpon his heed to set of sondry hewe
Garlandes, ful of freshe floures newe

And in a preuy corner, in despyte
Fonnde I Venus, and her porter Wrechesse
That was ful noble, and hauteyn of her pryce
Derke was that place, but after lyghtnesse
I sawe a lyte, vnnethes it myght be lesse
And on a bed of golde, she lay to rest
Tyl that the hote sonne gan to west

Her gylte heeres, with a golde threde
Ybounde were, vnbreyded as she lay
And naked from the brest vnto the hede
Men myght her se, and sothly for to say
The remenaunt, couered wel to my pay
Right with a lytell kerchefe of valence
There was no thycker clothe of defence

The place gaue a thousande sauours soote
And Bacchus god of wyne, sate her besyde
And Ceres nexte, that doth of hunger bote
And as I sayd, a myddes lay Cupyde
To whom on knees, the yonge folkes cryde
To be theyr helpe, but thus I let her lye
And farther in the temple, I gan espye

That in despyte of Venus the chaste
Ful many a bowe ybroke, honge on the wal
Of maydens, suche as gon her vowes waste
In her seruice, and payned ouer al
Of many a sorte, of which I reherse shal
A fewe, as of Calyste and Athalante
And many a mayde, of which I name I wante

Semyramus, Candace, and Hercules
Hebbis, Dido, Tysbe, and Piramus
Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles
Helayne, Cleopatre, and Troylus
Scylla, and she the mother of Romulus
All these were paynted on that other syde
And all her loue, and in what plyte they dyde

Whan I was comen aren in to the place
That I of spake, that was so fayre and grene
Forthe walked I tho, my selfen to solace
Tho was I ware, where there sate a quene
That as of lyght the somer sonne shene
Passeth the sterre, right so ouer mesure
She fayrer was than any creature

And in a launde, upon an hyl of floures
Was set this noble goddesse Nature
Of braunches were her halles & her boures
Iwrought, after her craft and her mesure
Ne there nas foule, þ cometh of engendrure
That there ne were present, in her presence
To take her doome, and yeue her audyence

For this was on saynt Valentynes day
Whan euery foule cometh to chese her make
Of euery kynde, that men thynke may
And that so huge a noyse gan they make
That erthe, see, and tree, and euery lake
So ful was, that vnneth there was space
For me to stande, so ful was all the place

And right as Alayne, in the playnt of kynde
Deuyseth nature, of suche aray and face
In suche aray, men myght her there fynde
This noble Emperesse ful of al grace
And euery foule take her owne place
Ay there were wont alway to ben to fore
On saynt Valentynes day, standen there

That is to saye, the foules of raunne
Were highest set, and than the foules smale
That eaten, as that nature wolde ordayne
As worme or thynge, of which I telle no tale
But water foule, sat lowest in the dale
And foules that vsen be fore, sate on þ grene
And that so many, that wonder was to sene

There myght men the royal Egle fynde
That with his sharpe look, perseth the sonne
And other Egles of a lower kynde
Of which that clerkes wel deuysen conne
There was the tyrant with his fethers donne
And grene, I mene þ goshauke þ doth pryde
To byrdes, for his outrageous raunne

The gentil faucon, þ with his fete desyreth
The kynges hande, the hardy sperhauke eke
The quales for the which men that peyneth
Hym self ful ofte, the larke for to seke
There was the doue, with her eyen meke
The ielous swan, ayenst his dethe þ syngeth
The owle eke, that of deth the bode bryngeth

The crane, the geaunt, with his trompes sowne
The theef the chough, & the chatteryng pye
The skornyng Jaye, the Ielle for the hedrowne
The false lapwynge, ful of trechery
The stare, that the counsayle can bewrye
The taune Kuddocke, and the cowarde kyte
The Cocke, that horologe is of thropes lyte

The sparowe Venus son, & the nyghtyngale
That clepeth forth the freshe leaues newe
The swalowe murdrer of the flyes smale
That maken hony, of floures freshe of hewe
The wedded turtell, with his hert trewe
The pecocke, with his aungel fethers bryght
The fesaunt, scorner of the cocke by nyght

The waker gose, the cuckowe euer vnkynde
The popyngay, ful of delycasy
The drake, stroyer of his owne kynde
The storke, wreker of auoutry
The hote cormeraunt, ful of glotony
The raun & the crowe, with his voice of care
The thrustel olde, and the frosty feldefare

What shuld I say, of foules of euery kynde
That in this worlde haue fethers & nature
Ben myght in that place assembled fynde
Before that noble goddes of Nature
And echo of them dyd his busy cure
Benygnely to chese, or for to take
By her accorde, his formel or his make

But to the poynt, Nature held on her honde
A formell Egle, of hap the gentyllest
That euer she among her workes fonde
The most benygne, and eke the goodlyest
In her was euery vertue, at his rest
So forth, that nature her self had blysse
To loke on her, and oft her brest to kysse

Nature the vycar of the almyghty lorde
That bode, colde, hoor, dryat, moyst, and dry
Hath hym ryt, by euen nombre of accorde
In esy voyce, began to speke and say
Foules take hede of my sentence I pray
And for your owne ease, in fordryng of your
As fast as I may speke, I wyl me spede nede

Ye know wel, how on saynt Valentynes day
By my statute, & through my gouernaunce
Ye do chese your makes, and after flye away
With hym, as I prike you with plesaunce
But nathelesse, as by ryghtful ordynaunce
Thus must ye here, for al this worlde to wyn
But he that most worthy is, shal begyn

The tercel Egle, as ye knowe ful wele
The foule royal, above you al in degre

The

The wyse worthy, the secrete true as stele
The whiche I haue formed, as ye may se
In euery parte, as it belle lyketh me
Tenedeth not his chappe you to deuyse
pe shal further chese, and speken in his gyse

And after hym, by order shal ye chese
After your kynde, euerych as you lyketh
And as your hap is, shal ye wynne or lese
But whiche of you, that fowle most entriketh
God sende hym her, that forell for hym lyketh
And therwithal, the Tercel can she cal
And sayde, my fonne the choyse is to the fal

But nathelasse, in this condicion
Shall be the choyse of euerych that is here
That she agree to his election
Who so he be, that shulde hen her fere
This is our vsage alway, fro yere to yere
And who so may at this tyme haue his grace
In shrift al tyme he came in to this place

With heed enclyned, & with ful humble chere
This royal Tercel spake, and sayed nought
Vnto my foueraygne lady, and not my fere
I make a chele, with wyl, herte, and thought
Cheformel on your hande, so wel you worthy is
Whose I am al, and euer wyl her serue
Do what her lulle, to do me lyue or sterue

Beseching her of mercy, and of grace
As she that is my lady foueraygne
Or let me dye, here present in this place
For certes, longe may I not lyue in payne
For in my herte is corue'd euery payne
Saurng remarde onely to my trouthe
Thy dere herte, haue on my wo some routhe

And if I be founde to her vntrewe
Disobeysaunt, or wylful negligent
Abaunt oure, or in processe loue a newe
I pray to you this be my iugement
That with these foules I be all to rent
That vyle day, that she me euer fynde
To her vntrewe, or in my gylte vnkynde

And tho that none loueth her so wel as I
Although the neuer of loue me be her
Than ought she be myne, through her mercy
For other bonde, can I none other knet
For wel nor wo, neuer shal I let
To serue her, how farre so that she wende
Say what you lyste, my tale is at an ende.

Right as the fresshe rede rose newe
Agayns the sonne some coloured is
Right so for shame, al waxen gan the hewe
Of this formel, when she herd al this
Neither the answere dyd she farre amis
So sore abasshed was she, tyl that Nature
Sayd, doughter drede you not, I you assure

Another Tercel egle spake anone
Of lower kynde, and sayd he shuld not be
I loue her better than ye do, be sayne Johan
Or at the lest, I loue her as wel as ye
And lenger haue serued her with hertes dere
And if she shulde haue loued for seruyse
To me alone had be the guerdonyng

I dare the say, if she me fredom sette
Vnkynde iangler, or rebel in any wyse
Or false, do me hange or drawe
And but I deare me wel her for to serue
As wel as my wyt can me deuyse
I gyue it vp, and quyte her hertes fully
Take her my lyfe, and al the good I may

The fourthe tercel egle spake tho
Ye shal not loke to me be fals ne wele
For euery foule for his owne lyfe
For loue of kynde, wyl loue wel his make
And cheose hym eke, or he be take
And for my part, though I shulde dye
To dethe anone, I wyl her not denye

I nyl say nay, but that I wyl her serue
Fayne wolde I that it were rewarded me
But sythe I wot my seruyce may not deserue
Her grace, I wyl me not endyte
I am not wyse, that knowe wel I myne owne vyce
I wyl her serue, to my lyues ende
Do what her lyste, to bete me or blende

I me say not this be me, for I mean
Do no seruyce, that may me displease
But I dare say, I am her most owne man
As to myne Dame, and serue shal in pees
Nor shal no wordes, fro hens me lese
I wyl be here, to her for to synge
And trewe, in al that her may bestynge

Of al my lyfe, syth that day I was borne
So ameles plee, in loue or other thynge
Ne herde I neuer no man me before
Make that bad her ese and comforte
For to rehearse them here, their speche

And from the morowe gan this speche laste
Til downward went the sonne wonder faste

The noyse of foules for to be delyuerde
So loude range, haue done and let vs wende
That wel wende I, ꝑ wode had al to shiuerd
Come of they cryed, alas ye wyl vs shende
Whan shal your cursed pledyng haue an ende
Howe shulde a iuge, either partye leue
For ye or nay, without any preue

The gose, the ducke, and the kuckowe also
So cryed kekе kekе, cuckow, quicke quicke hye
Throughe myne eares, the noyse wente tho
The gose sayde than, al this nys worth a flye
But I can shape herof a remedye
And wyl say my verdyte, fayre and swithe
For water foule, who so be wrothe or blithe

And I for worme foule, said the fole cuckow
For I wyl of myn owne authoritе
For cõmon spede, take on me the charge now
For to delyuer vs, it is great charitie
Ye may abyde a whyle, yet perde
(Quod the Turtel) if it be your wyl
I wight may speke, it were as good be styl.

I am a sede foule, one the vnworthyest
That wote I wel, and leest of conninge
But better is, that a wyghes tonge rest
Than enfumete him of suche borynge
Of whiche he neither rede can nor synge
And ꝑ so it befalle, ful foule hi self acloyeth
For offyce vncõuuted, ofte anoyeth

Nature, whiche that alway had an eare
To murmure of the leudenesse beforne
With facõde voice said, hold your tõges there
And I shal soone, I hope a counsayle fynde
You for to deliuer, & fro this noyse vnbynde
I charge, of euery flocke ye shal one cal
To say the verdyte of you foules al

Assented were, to this conclusyon
The birdes al, and foules of rauyne
Haue chosen first, by playne election
The Tercelet of the faucon to defyne
Al her sentence, and as hym lust to termine
And to Nature, hym they byd presente
And she accepteth hym with glad entente

The tercelet sayd than, in this manere
Ful harde it were, to preue it by reason
Who louyth best, this gentel formel here
For euery che hath suche replicacyon
That by skylles may non be brought adown
I can nat se, that argumentes auayle
Than semeth it, there must be battayle

Al redy quod these Egle tercelles tho
Nay sirs (quod he) if that I durst it say
Ye do me wronge, my tale is not vdo
For sirs, taketh nat a grefe I pray
It may not be as ye wolde, in this way
Ours is the voyce, ꝑ haue ꝑ charge in hande
And to the Juges dome, ye muste stande

And therfore peace I say, as to my wit
We wolde thynke, howe that the worthyest
Of auȝthode, and lengest had vsed it
Most of estate, of blode the gentyllest
Were syttinge for her, if that her lest
And of these thre, she wote her selfe I trowe
Whiche that he be, for it is ryght to knowe

The water foules, haue their heedes layde
Togyder, and of shorte auysement
Whan euerych had his verdyte sayde
They sayd sothly, al by one assent
Howe that the goos, with the facõde gent
That so desireth, to pronounce our nede
Shal tel our tale, ꝑ prayed to godhert spede

And for these water foules, tho began
The goose to speke, and in her cakelynge
She said, peace nowe, take kepe euery man
And herke which a reason I shal forth bring
My witte is sharpe, I loue no taryeng
I say I rede him, tho he were my brother
But she wyl loue him, let him loue another

Lo here a parfyte reason of a gose
(Quod the sperhauke neuer more shee the
Lo, suche a thing it is to haue a ronge lose
Nowe parde foole, yet were it better for the
Haue holde thy peace, than shewde thy nicete
It lyeth nat in his wit, nor in hys wyl
But sothe is sayde, a foole can nat be styl

The laughter arose, of gentyl foules al
And eyght anone, the sede fowles chosen had
The Turtel trewe, and gan her to hem cal
And prayed her to save, the sothe sad
Of this mater, and asked what she rad
And she answered, that playnly her entent
She wolde shewe, and sothly what she mente

Nay

Nay, god forbede a louer shulde chaunge
The Turtel sayd, a wexte for shame al reed
Though that his lady, euer more be straūge
yet let hym serue her alway, tyl he be deed
forsothe, I prayse not the goses reed
for tho the dred, I wolde none other make
I wyl be hers, tyl that the dethe me take

Wel ybourded (qō the ducke) by my hat
That men shulde loue alway causeles
who can a reason fynde, or wyt in that
Daunceth he merry, that is myrthles
who shulde recke, of that is rechelesse
Pequeke yet, qō the ducke ful wel and fayre
There be mo sterres in the skye than a payre

Nowe fye churle, qō the gentel Tercelet
Out of the dounghyl, came that word aright
Thou canst not se, whiche thinge is wel beset
Thou farest by loue, as owles do by lyght
The day he blindeth, ful wel they se by nyght
Thy kynde is of so lowe nature ched nesse
That what loue is, thou canst se nor gesse

Tho gan the cuckow put him forthe in preace
For foule that eateth wormes, and sayd blyue
So I (qō he) may haue my make in peace
I recche nought, howe longe that ye stryue
Let ethe of hem be soleyne al her lyue
This is my rede, sens they may nat acorde
This shorte lesson, nedeth not recorde

Ye, haue the glutton fylde his paunche
Than are we wel, sayd the Emerion
Thou murdrer of the heysugge, on ye braūche
That brought the forth, thou ruful glutton
Lyue thou soleyn, wormes corruption
For no force is, of lacke of thy nature
Go lewde be thou, whyle the world may dure

Now peace (qō Nature) I cōmaunde here
For I haue herde al your opinion
And in effecte, yet be we neuer the nere
But finally, this is my conclusyon
That he her selfe, shal haue her election
Of whom her lyst, who so be wroth or blithe
Him ye she chese th, he shall her haue as swithe

For sythe it may not here discussed be
Who loueth her best, as sayd the Tercelet
Than wol I done this fauour to her, ye she
Shal haue right him, on whom her hert is set
And he her, that his hert hath on her knet
This inge I Nature, for I may not lye
To none estate, I haue none other eye

But as for counsayle, for to chose a make
Yf I were reason, than wolde I
Counsayle you, the royal tercel take
As sayd the tercelet, ful shrifully
As for the gentelest, and most worthy
which I haue wrought so wel to my pleasaūce
That to you it ought ben a sufficiaunce

With dredful voice, ye formel her answerde
My right ful lady, goddesse of Nature
Soth is, that I am euer vnder your yerde
As is euery che other creature
And must be yours, while my lyfe may dure
And therfore graunt me my first bone
And myn entent, you wel I say right soone

I graunt it you qō he and right anone
This formel Egle spake in this degre
Almighty quene, vnto this wer be done
I aske respite for to auysen me
And after that to haue my choyce all fre
This al and some, that I wold chese and take
Ye get no more, although ye do me deye

I wol not serue Venus ne Cupide
Forsothe as yet, by no maner way
Nowe sens it may none other wyse betyde
(Quod Nature here is no more to say)
Than wolde I that these foules were away
Che with his make, for tarying longer here
And sayd hem thus, as ye shal after here

To you spoke I, ye tercelets (qō Nature)
Be the of good herte, and serueth al your
A yere is not so longe to endure
And che of you payne him in this degre
For to do wel, for god wote quyte is he
For your this yere, what after so befal
This enterme, is dressed for you al

And whē this werke brought was to an ende
To euery foule, Nature gaue his make
By euen acorde, and on her way they wende
And lofde the blisse and ioye that they make
Forth of hem gan other in his wynges take
And with her neckes, che gan other wynde
Thanking alway, ye noble goddesse of kynde

But first were chosen foules for to synge
As yere by yere, was alway her vsaunce

To

To synge a roundel at her departyng
To do Nature honour and pleasaunce
The note I trowe, maked was in Fraunce
The wordes were suche, as ye may here find
The nexte vers, as I nowe haue in mynde
Qui bien ayme tarde oublie.

Now welcome somer, with thy sonnes soft
That hast this wynter wethers ouershake
Saynt Valentyne, thou arte ful hye on lofte
Which driuest away, the longe nyghtes blake
Thus synge men smale foules for thy sake
Wel haue they cause for to gladen ofte
Sens eche of hem recouered hath his make
Ful blisful may they syng when they awake.

And tho the shouryng when her songe was do
That the foules made, at her ryght away
I woke, and other bokes toke me to
To rede vpon, and yet I rede alway
I hope yt was to rede so some day
That I shal mete some thynge for to fare
The bet, and thus to rede I nyl not spare.

Explicit.

The Floure of Curtesye

IN Feuerier, whan the frostye
Moone
Was horned, full of Phebus
fyry lyght
And that she gan to reyse her
streames soone
Saynte Valentyne, vpon thy blisful nyght
Of dutye, whan glad is euery wight
And foules chese, to hoyde her olde sorowe
Eurydyce hys make, vpon the next morowe

The same tyme I herde a larke synge
Ful lustely, agayne the morowe gray
Awake ye louers, out of your slombrynge
This glad morowe, in al the haste ye may
Some obseruaunce do the vnto this day
Your choyse ayen of hert to renewe
In confirming, for euer to be trewe

And ye that be of choysyng at your large
This lusty daye, by custome of nature
Take vpon you the blisful holy charge
To serue loue, whyle your lyfe may dure
With herte, body, and al your besy cure
For euermore, as Venus and Cipride
For you disposeth, and the god Cupide

For loye owe we playnly to obey
Vnto this lordes myghty ordinaunce
And mercyleste rather for to dy
Than euer in you be founden variaunce
And though your lyfe be medled wt greuaūce
And at your herte closet be your wounde
Yet alway one, there as ye are bounde

That whan I had herde and lysted longe
With deuoute herte, the lusty melodye
Of this heuenly comfortable songe
So agreable, as by ermonye
I rose anone, and faste gan me hye
Towarde a groue, and the way take
Foules to sene, euerych chose his make

And yet I was ful thrustye in languishyng
Myn ague was so feruent in hys hete
Whan Aurora, for drery complaynynge
Can distyl her christal teres wete
Vpon the soyle, with siluer dewe so swete
For she durst for shame not apere
Vnder the light of Phebus beames clere

And so for anguishe of my paynes kene
And for constraynte of my sighes sore
I set me downe, vnder a laurer grene
Ful pytously, and alway more and more
As I beheelde in to the holtes hore
I gan complayne myn infortune deedly smert
That aye so sore crampeshe at myne hert

And whyle that I in my drery payne
Sate, and beheelde about on euery tre
The foules syttyng, alway twayne & twayne
Thus thought I thus, alas what may this be
That euery foule hath his lyberte
Freely to chose, after hys desire
Eurydyce his make, thus fro yere to yere

The fly wynne, the tytemose also
The lytel sedbrest, haue free election
To flyen fere, and togyther go
Where as hem lyste, aboute enuyron
As they of kynde haue inclinacyon
And as Nature, emprente and gyde
Of euery thyng lyst to prouyde

But

But man alone, alas the harde stounde
Ful cruelly, by kyndes ordinaunce
Constrayned is, and by statute bounde
And debarred from al suche plesaunce
What meneth this, what is this purueyaūce
Of god aboue, agayne al right of kynde
Without cause, so narowe man to bynde

Thus may I syne and playne, alas
My wofal houre, and my disauenture
That dulfully stonde in the same caas
So ferre behynde, from al helth and cure
My wounde abydeth like a surfaunce
For me fortune so felly lyste dispose
My harme is hyd, that I dare not disclose

For I my herte haue set, in suche a place
There I am neuer likely for to spede
So ferre I am hyndred from her grace
That saue daunger, I haue none other mede
And thus alas, I not who shal me rede
Ne for myne helpe shape remedye
For Wale bouche, and for false enuye

The whiche twayne, are stonden in my wey
Falsely, and false suspecion
Is bery cause also that I dye
Enuying and sore of my distruction
So that I fele, in conclusyon
Both her trames, that they wol me shende
Of my labour, that deth more make an ende

Yet or I dye, with herte, wyl, and thought
To god of loue, this auowe I make
As I best can, howe dere that it be bought
Where so it be, that I slepe or wake
While Boreas dothe the leaues slake
As I haue height, playnly tyl I serue
For wel or wo, that I shal her serue

And for her sake, nowe this holy tyme
Saince Valeuyne, somwhat shal I write
Although so be, that I can nat tyme
Nor curiously by no crafte endyte
Yet leuer I haue, that she put the wyte
In vncomyng, than in negligence
What euer I say, of her excellence

What euer I sayd, it is of dute
In sothfastnesse, and no presumpcion
This I coniure to you that shal it se
That it is al vnder correction
What I reherse in commendacion
Of her, that I shal to you as bryue
So as I can, her vertues here discryue

Right by exsample, as the somer sonne
Passeth the sterre, with his beames shene
And Lucifer, amonge the skyes donne
A morowe she weth, to bonde nyghtes tene
So verily, withouten any wene
My lady passeth, who so taketh hede
Al tho alyue, to speke of womanhede

And as the Ruby hath the soueraynte
Of riche stones, and the regarde
And the rose of swetnesse and beaute
Of frethe flowres, without any lye
Right so in sothe, with her goodly eye
She passeth al, in bounte and gentilesse
Of maners eke, and of gentilesse

For she is bothe the fayrest and the bryghtest
To reken al, in very sothfastnesse
For euery vertues is in her at reste
And furthermore, to speke of stedfastnesse
She is the sore, and of semelynesse
The very myrour, and of gouernaūce
To al exsample, without varyaūce

Of port benigne, and bounder glad of chere
Dauyng euermore her reuerence aboue
Alway to reason, so that her desire
Is bridled are, by wyte and prouidence
There to of wyte, and of her prudence
She is the welle, are bounde of grace
That lyue herne, her seluen to the grave

And ouer this, in her daliaunce
Lowly she is, discrete and wyse
And goodly glad de, by attemperaunce
That euery wight, of high and lowe degre
Are glad where, with her for to be
So that shortly, if I shal not lye
She named is, the Floure of curtesye

And there to speke of femynyte
The leste meanyng in comparison
Goodly abashed, hauyng are pyte
Of hem that ben in tribulacion
For she alone is consolacion
To al that are in mischiefe and in nede
To comforte hem, of her womanhede

And are in vertue is her best charge
Sad and demure, and but of wordes fewe

Dredful also of tonges that ben large
Eschewyng aye hem, that lysten to hewe
Aboue her heed, her wordes for to shewe
Dishonestly to speake of anye wyght
She deedly hateth, of hem to haue a syght

The herte of whom, so honest is and cleane
And her entente, so faythful and entere
That she ne may, for al the worlde sustene
To suffre her eares any worde to here
Of frende nor foe, neyther ferre ne nere
Amisse resowning, ꝑ hynder shulde his name
And yf she do, she weyeth teed for shame

So trewly in menyng she is in sette
Without chaungyng, or any doublenesse
For bountie and beautie, are togyther knette
In her persone, vnder faythfulnesse
For lyde sheris of newfangleneesse
In herr aye one, for euer to perseuer
There she is sette, and neuer to dissseuer

I am to rude, her vertues euerychone
Connyngly to discerne and write
For wel ye wote, colour haue I none
Lyke her discresion, craftely to endyte
For what I say, al it is to lyte
Wherfore to you, thus I me excuse
That I aquaynted am not with no muse

Yet nethelesse, my style to gouerne
In her preyse and commendacion
I am to blynde, so hyly to discerne
Of her goodnes, to make discripcyon
Saue thus I saye in conclusyon
If that I shal shortly cõmende
In her is naught, that nature can amende

For good she is, lyke to Polycene
And in fayrenesse, to the quene Helayne
Stedfast of herte, as was Dorigene
And wefely trouthe, if I shal nat fayne
In constaunce eke & faythe, she maye attayne
To Cleopatre, and therto as fertune
As was of Troye, the white Antygone

As hester meke, lyke Judith of prudence
Kynde as Alceste, or Marcia Catoun
And to Grisylde lyke in pacyence
And Ariadne of discrecioun
And to Lucrece, that was of Rome toun
She may be lykened as for honeste
And for her faythe, vnto Penelope

To fayre Phillis, and to Hipsypyle
For innocence, and for womanhede
For semelynesse vnto Canace
And ouer this, to speke of goodlyhede
She passeth al that I can of rede
For worde and dede, that she naught ne fail
Accorde in vertue, and her werkes al

For though that Dido with wrthe sage,
Was in her tyme stedfast to Enee
Of hastynesse yet she dyd outrage
And so for Jason dyd also Medee
But my lady is so auysee
That bountie & beautie, both in her demeyne
She maketh bountie alway soueraynе

This is to meane, bountie gothe afore
Lad by prudence, and hath the soueraynte
And beaute foloweth, ruled by her lore
That she ne fende her in no degre
So that in one, this goodly freche fre
Surmountyng al, withouten any were
Is good and fayre, in one persone yfere

And though that I for very ignoraunce
Ne may discerne her vertues by and by
Yet on this day for a remembraunce
Onely supported vnder her mercy
With quakynge honde, I shal ful humbly
To her hynesse, my rudenesse for to quyte
A lytel balade, here beneth endyte

Euer as I can suppryse in myne herte
Alway with feare, betwyxt drede and shame
Lest out of lose, any worde asterte
In this myrre, to make it seme lame
Chaucer is dede, that had suche a name
Of fayre makyng, that without wene
Fayrest in our tonge, as the Laurer grene

We may assay for to counterfete
Hys gay style, but it wol not be
The welle is dry, with the lycoure swete
Bothe of Clye, and of Caliope
And first of al, I wol excuse me
To her that is grounde of goodlyhede
And thus I say, vntyl her womanhede.

¶ Balade simple.

With

With al my myght, and my best entent
With al the faith that mighty god of kynde
Me yaue, sith he me soule and knowyng lent
I chese, and to this bonde euer I me bynde
To loue you best, while I haue lyfe & mynde
Thus herde I foules in the daunynge
Upon the day of saynte Valentyne synge

Yet chese I at the beginnyng, in this entent
To loue you, though I no mercy fynde
And if you lyst I dyed, I wolde assent
Iseuer twynne I quicke of this lyne
Suffiseth me to sene your fethers fynde
Thus herde I foules in the morwynge
Upon the day of saynte Valentyne synge

And ouer this, myne hertes luste to bente
In honour onely of the wodde bynde
Holy I vene, neuer to repente
Inioye or wo, where so that I wynde
Cofore Cupyde, with his eyen blynde
The foules all, whan Tytan dyd springe
With deuout hert, me thought I herd singe.

Lenuoye.

Princesse of beautie, to you I represent
This symple dyte, rude as in makynge
Of hert & wyll, fayethful in myne entent
Lyke as this day, foules herde I synge.

Here endeth the floure of Curtesy,
and hereafter folowyth, howe
pyte is deed and buryed
in a gentyle herte.

Pyte that I haue tought
so yore ago
With hert sore, and ful of
besy payne
That in this world was
neuer wight so wo
Without death, and yf I
shal nat fayne
My purpose was, pyte to complayne
Upon the cruelte and tyrannye
Of loue, that for my trouth doth me dye

And that I by length of certayne yeres
Had euer in one, sought a ryme to speke
To Pyte ran I, al bysprynt with teres
To prayen her on Cruelte me awreke
But or I myght with any worde out breke
Or tel her any of my paynes smerte
I founde her deed, and buryed in an herte

Adowne I fell, whan I sawe the herse
Dead as a stone, whyle ꝑ the swoune me laft
But vp I rose, with colour ful diuerse
And pyteously on her myne eyen I caft
And neuer the corse I gan pitesen fast
And for the soule, I hope me for to pray
I was but lorne, there was no more to say

Thus am I slayne, sythe that Pyte is deed
Alas that day that euer it shulde fall
What maner mã dare now bold vp bleed
To whom shal now any sorowful hert call
Howe Cruelte hath cast to ler vs all
In vdle hope, folke to delefle of payne
Sith she is deed, to whom shall we complayne

But yet encreaseth me this wonder more
That no wight were that she is deed but I
So many men as in her tyme her sawe
And yet the deyde so sodainly
For I haue sought her euer full besily
Sythe I had first wytte or inwnde
But she was deed er I cowde her fynde

Aboute her herse there stoden ladely
Without any mo, as thought me
Bounte, perfytly wel armed and rychely
And freshe Beaute, Lust, and Jolyte
Allured maner, Youthe, and Honeste
Wysdome, Estate, Drede, and Gouernaunce
Confedred bothe by bonde and alyaunce

I complaynte had I wryten in my honde

To haue put to pyte, as a pyl
But I there al this company fonde
That rather wolde al my cause spyl
Than do me helpe, I helde my playnte styl
For to those folke withouten fayle
Without pyte, there may no pyl auayle

Than leaue al vertues, saue onely pyte
Kepyng the corse, as ye haue herde me sayne
Confederd by bonde vnto Cruelte
And be assented whan I shal be slayne
And I haue put my complaynte vp agayne
For to my foes, my pyl I dare not shewe
The effecte, which saith thus in wordes fewe

Humblest of hert, hyest of reuerence
Benigne flour, crowne of vertues al
Sheweth vnto your royal excellence
Your seruaunt, if I durst me so cal
His mortal harme, in whiche he is yfal
And nought al onely for his wofulfate
But for your renome, as he shal declare

It sondeth thus, that your contrary cruelte
Alyed is ayenst your regalye
Vnder colour of womanly beaute
For men shulde not knowe her tyrannye
With Bounte, Gentylesse, and Curtesy
And hath depriued you of your place
That is high beaute, apertenant to youre grace

For kyndely, by your heritage right
Ye be annexed euer vnto bounte
And verely ye ought do your myght
To helpe trouthe in his aduersyte
Ye be also the crowne of beaute
And eeres if ye want in these two thynge
The worlde is lore, there is no more to sayne

Eke what auayleth maner and gentylesse
Without you, benigne creature
Shal cruelte be your gouernouresse
Alas, what herte may it longe endure
Wherfore but ye rather take cure
To bridle that perylous alyaunce
Ye seem hem that ben in your obeysaunce

And further, yf ye suffre thus
Your renome is fordo in a throwe
There shal no man wete what pyte is
Alas, that euer your renome is fal so lowe
Ye be also fro your heritage ythrowe
By cruelte, that occupyeth your place
And we dispayred, that seken your grace

Haue mercy on me, thou Herenus quene
That you haue sought, so tenderly and sore
Let some streme of lyght on me be sene
That loue and dyede you euer lenger ye more
For sothly to sayne, I beare so sore
And though I be not comyng for to playne
For goddes loue haue mercy on my payne

My payne is this, that what so I desyre
That haue I not, ne nothyng lyke therto
And euer serueth desyre myne herte on fyre
Eke on that other syde where that I go
What maner thyng that may encrese my wo
That haue I redy vnsought euery where
We lacketh but my dethe, a than my bere

What nedeth to shewe perel of my payne
Sythe euery wo, that hert may bethynke
I suffre, and yet I dare not to you playne
For wel I wote, though I wake or wynke
Ye recke not whether I flete or synke
And natheles yet my trouth I shall fulfyll
Vnto my dethe, and that shal well be sene

This is to sayne, I wyl be yours euer
Though ye me slee by cruelte your so
Algate my spyrite shal neuer discouer
Fro your seruyce, for any payne or wo
Syth ye be yet deed, alas that it is so
Thus for your dethe, I may wepe & playne
With hert sore, and ful of besy payne

Explicit.

La belle dame sans mercy.

Alse in a dreme, not fully well awaked
The golden slepe me wrapped vnder his wyng
Yet nat for thy I rose, a well nygh naked
All sodaynly my selfe remembryng
Of a mater, leuyng al other thyng
Which I must do withouten more delay
For hem, which I durst not displease

gay charge was this, to translate by and by
Nothyng forgyue, as parte of my penaunce
A boke, called La bel dame sans mercy
Which master Alayne made of remembraunce
Chefe secretarie with the kyng of Fraunce
And herupon a whyle I stode musynge
And in my selfe greatly ymaginynge

What worse I shuld performe ꝑ sayd processe
Consyderyng by good aduysement
My vnconnyng, and my great symplenesse
And ayenwarde the straytè cõmaundement
Which that I had, and thus in myne entent
I was verrd and tourned vp and downe
And yet at last, as in conclusyon

I cast my clothes on, and went my way
This forsayd charge hauyng in remembraunce
Tyl I came to a lusty grene valey
Ful of floures, to se a great pleasaunce
And so boldly with ther benygne suffraunce
Which rede this boke, touchyng this matere
Thus I began, if it please you to here.

NAt long ago, trotyng an easy paas
I fel in thought of ioyful desperate
With great disease & payne, so ꝑ I was
Of all louers the most infortunate
Serth by his darte, moste cruel ful of hate
The derth hath take my lady and maystresse
And lefte me sole, thus dyscomfyte & mate
Sore languyshyng, and in way of dyspresse

Than sayd I thus, it falleth me to cesse
Either to ryme, or dytees for to make
And I surely to make a ful promesse
To laugh no more, but wepe i clothes blacke
My ioyful tyme alas now doth it slake
For in my selfe I fele no maner of ease
Let it be writtẽ, suche fortune as I take
Which neither me, nor non other doth please

Yf it were so, my wyl or myne entent
Constrayned were, a ioyful thyng to wryte
My penne coude neuer knowe, what it ment
To speke therof, my tonge hath no delyte
Tho with my mouthe I laugh, moche or lyte
Myne eyen thuld make a countrenaunce bytrue
My hert also, wold haue therof dyspyte
The wepyng teares, haue so large yssue

These sicke louers I leue, & to hem longes
Which lede ther lyfe in hope of alegeaunce
That is to say, to make balades and songes
Euery of hem, as they fele ther greuaunce
For the that was my ioy, and my plesaunce
Whose soule I pray god of his mercy saue
She hath my wyl, myne hertes obeysaunce
Which lyeth here, within this tombe y graue

Fro this tyme forth, tyme is to holde my pees
It werreth me, this matter for to trete
Let other louers put hem selfe in prees
Ther season is, my tyme is nowe forgete
Fortune by strength, the forces hath vnbete
Al herin was sperde all my worldly ryches
And all the goodes, whiche that I haue gete
In my best tyme of youthe, and lustynesse

Loue hath me kepte vnder his gouernaunce
Yf I myssed, god graunte me forgyuenesse
Yf I dyd wel, yet fele I no plesaunce
It caused me ther loue not beforneste
For whan she dyed, that was my mayster
Her welfare, than made the same prouysyon
The derthe hath ther yn bounde all
Which for nothyng myne hert

In this great thought, sore troubled in
Alone thus rode I, al the moste
Tyl at the last it happed me to
The place, wherin I cast me to
Whan that I had no further for to
And as I went, my lodgyng
Right soone I herde a
In a garden, where myn

With that anone, I went
My selfe and I, me thought
But ryght anone that wer my
Had me espyed, and yet I
They came for me, all arwarde
Somwhat by force, somwhat
That in no wyse, I coude my
But nedes I must come in and

At my comyng the ladyes euery
Bad me welcome, god wote right gentylly
And made me chere, euery one by one
A great dele better than I was worthe
And of ther grace, shewed me great curtesy
In good disporte, bicause I shuld not mourne
That day I bode stil in ther company
Which was to me, a gracyous sojourne

The bordes were spred, in right lyeel space

The ladyes sat, eche as hem semed best
There were no deedly seruaūtes in the place
But chosen men, right of the goodlyest
And some ther wer, peraūture most freshest
That sawe their iudges full demure
Without semblaunt, eyther to most or lest
Natwithstandyng, they had hem vnder cure

Among al other, one I gan espy
Whiche in great thought, ful oftē came & wēt
As one that had ben rauyshed vtterly
In his language, nat greatly dylygent
His countenaunce he kept vp great tourment
But his desyre farre passed his reason
For euer his eye, went after his entent
Ful many a tyme, whan it was no season

To make chere, fore him selfe he payned
And outwardly he fayned great gladnesse
To synge also, byforne he was constrayned
For no plesaunce, but very shamfastnesse
For the complaynt of his most heuynesse
Came to his voyce, alway without request
Lyke as the fourme of bryddes doth expresse
Whan they synge loude, in frythe or in forest

Other there were, that serued in the hal
But none lyke him, as after myne aduyse
For he was pale, and somwhat leane withal
His speche also trymbled in fereful wyse
And euer alone, but whan he had seruyse
All blacke he ware, & no deuyse but playne
The thought by him, as my wyt coude suffyse
His hert was nothyng in his owne demeyne

To feest hem all, he had his diligence
And well he coude, right as it semed me
But euermore, whan he was in presence
His chere was done, it nolde none other be
His schole mayster had suche authoure
That all the while he bode styl in the place
Spoke coude he nat, but vpon her beaute
He loked styl, with a right pytous face

With that his heed he tourned at the last
For to beholde the ladyes euerychone
But euer in one, he set his eye stedfast
On her, which his thought was most vpon
For of his eyen, the shot I knewe anone
Which fereful was, vp right hūble requestes
Than to my selfe I sayd, by god alone
Suche one was I, or that I saw these festes

Out of the prese he went ful easely
To make stable his heuy countenaunce
And wote ye wel, he syghed wonderly
For his sorowes and wofal remembraunce
Than in him selfe, he made his ordynaunce
And forthwithal came to bryng in the messe
But for to ruge, his most wofal penaunce
God wote it was a pytous entremesse

After dyner anone, they hem auaunced
To daunce aboue the folke euerychone
And forthwithall, this heuy man he daunced
Sometyme with twaine, & somtime with one
Vnto hem al, his chere was after one
Nowe here nowe there, as fel by aueniure
But euer amonge, he drewe to her alone
Whiche he most dred, of lyuyng creature

To myne aduyse, good was his purueyāūce
Whan he her chose, to his maystres alone
If that her hert were set to his plesaunce
As moch as was her beaureous persone
For who so euer setteth his trust vpon
The reporte of the eyen, withouten more
He myght be deed, and grauen vnder stone
Or euer he shulde, his herte cale restore

In her faled nothyng, that I coude gesse
One wyle nor other, preuy nor perte
Fygurson she was, of all goodlynesse
To make a trouuer, for a louers herte
Right yonge & fresshe, a woman ful couerte
Assured wele of porte, and eke of chere
Wele at her ease, withouten wo or smerte
Al vnderneth the standerde of daungere

To se the feest, it wery ed me ful sore
For beuy love both sore the hert trauayle
Out of the prese, I me withdrawe therfore
And set me downe alone behynde a trayle
Ful of leues, to se a great meruayle
With grene wythes ybounden wonderly
The leues were so thycke withouten fayle
That throughout, no man might me espy

To this lady he came ful curtesly
Whā he thought tyme to daūce vp her a trace
Set in an herber, made ful plesaunly
They rested hem fro thens but a lytel space
Nygh hem were none, of a certayne compace
But onely they, as farre as I coude se
Saue the trayle, there I had chose my place
There was no more but were hem two & me

I heard

I heard the louer syghyng wonder sore
for aye the more, the sorer it him sought
his inwarde payne he coude not kepe in store
Nor for to speke, so hardy was he nought
his leche was nere, ꝑ greter was his thought
he mused sore, to conquere his desyre
for no man may to more penaūce be brought
than in his heate, to bring him to the fyre

The hert began to swel within his cheste
so sore strayned, for anguyshe & for payne
That al to perce almost it to brest
when bothe at ones, so sore it dyd constraine
Desyre was bolde, but shame it gan refraine
That one was large, the other was ful close
Bolyrel charge was laide on him certayne
To kepe suche werre, and haue so many foes

ful often tymes to speke, him selfe he payned
But shamfastnesse & drede, sayd euer nay
Yet at the last, so sore he was constrayned
when he ful longe had put it in delay
To his lady, right thus than gan he say
with dredeful voyce, wepyng, halfe in rage
for me was purueyed, an vnhappy day
when I fyrst had a sight of your vysage

I suffre payne god wote, ful hote brennynge
To cause my deth, al for my true seruyse
And I se wel, ye recke therof nothynge
Nor take no hede of it, in no kynde wyse
But when I speke after my best aduyse
Ye set it at nought, but make therof a game
And thoughe I serue, so great an enterprise
Ye peyseth not your worthyp nor your fame

Alas, what shulde it be to you preiudyce
Yf that a man do loue you faythfully
Co your worthyp, eschewyng euery vyce
Sith I yours, and wyl be verely
I chalenge nought of ryght, and reason why
for I am hole submyt vnto your seruyce
Right as you lyst it be, right so wyl I
To binde my selfe, where I was in frauchise

L amant.

Though it be so, that I can nat deserue
To haue your grace, but alway lyue in drede
Yet suffre me, you for to loue and serue
Without maugre, of your moste goodlyhede
Both fayth & trouth I gyue your womanhede
And my seruyce without any callynge
Loue hath me bounde, without wage or mede
To be your man, and leue al other thynge

La dame.

Whan this lady had herde al this language
She gaue answere, ful softe and demurely
Without chaungyng of colour or courage
Nothyng in hast, but mesurably
Me thinketh syr, your thought is great folye
Your purpose ye nought, your labour for to cese
for thynketh not, whiles ye lyue and I
In this mater, to set your hert in pease

L amant.

There may none make the peace, but onely ye
Which are the grounde & cause of al this war
for with your eyen, the letters written be
By which I am defyed and put a far
Your pleasaunt loke, my hert lobe that
Was made beraude, of thylke same defyaūce
Whiche vtterly bely ght me for to harme
By faythful trust, and al myne assyaunce

La dame.

To lyue in wo, he hath great fantasy
And of his herte also dyspert bolde
That onely for beholdyng of an eye
Cannat abyde in peace, as reason wolde
Other or me, if ye lyst ye may beholde
Your eyē are made to loke, who shulde me spare
I take no kepe, neyther of vengeaūce olde
Who seketh smerte, I counsayle him beware

L amant.

If it be so, one hurte another sore
In his defaute, that seketh the greuaūce
Of very ryght, a man may do no more
Yet reason wolde it were in remembraūce
And syth fortune onely by her chaūce
Hath caused me to suffre al this payne
By your beaute, with al the circumstaūce
And by lyst ye haue me, in so great disdayne

La dame.

To your persone me haue I no disdayne
Nor neuer had ne wolde, ne nought wyl haue
Nor right great loue, nor hatred in certayne
Nor your counsayle to know, so god me saue
Yf suche loue be in your mynde vngraue
That lyst thyng, may do you displeasaunce
Your to begyle, or make you sorre to raue
I wyl nat cause, no suche encombraunce

L amant.

What euer it be, ꝑ me hath thus purchased
Your enuye hath nat deserued in certayne
But feruent loue, so sore hath me vexed
That I vnware, am fallen in your chayne
And syth so is, as fortune lyst ordayne
My welfare is in your handes fat
In recompencyng of mine myscheuous payne

Who lonest dyeth, his care is lest of al

La dame.

This sickenesse is right easy to endure
But fewe people, it causeth for to dye
But what they meane, I knowe it very sure
Of more comforte, to drawe the remedy
Suche be there now, playnyng ful pytously
That sele god wote, nat aither greatest paine
And if so be, loue hurte so greuously
Lesse harme it were, one sorowful thi twayn

Lamant.

Alas madame, if that it myght you please
Moche better it were, by waye of gentylnesse
Of one sory, to make twayne wel at ease
Than hym to destroye that lyueth in distresse
For my desyre is, neyther more nor lesse
But my seruyce, to do for your plesaunce
In eschewyng al maner doubleneisse
To make two toyes, in stede of one greuaūce

La dame.

Of loue I seke, neither pleasaūce nor ease
Nor haue therin no great affyaunce
Though ye be sicke it doth me nothing please
Also I take no bede of your plesaunce
Those who so wyl, her hertes to auaunce
Free am I nowe, and free wyl I endure
To be ruled by mannes gouernaunce
For erthly good, Nay, that I you ensure

Lamant.

Loue, which ꝑ troye & sorow doth departe
Hath set the ladyes out of al seruage
And largely doth graunt hem for her parte
Lordshyp and rule of euery maner of age
The pore seruaūt, nought hath of auaūtage
But what he may get onely by purchesse
And he that ones to loue doth his homage
Ful often tymes, dere bought is the richesse

La dame.

Ladyes be nat so symple, thus I mene
So dul of wyt, so sotted in foly
That for wordes, which sayd be of ꝑ splene
In fayre langage, paynted ful plesauntly
Which ye and mo, holde scholes of daily
To make hem al, great wonders to suppose
But sone they can away, they hedes wryue
And to fayre speche, lyghtly they eres close

Lamant.

There is no man, that iangleth busyly
And setteth his hert, & al his mynde therfore
That by reason, may playne so pytously
As he that hath moche heuynesse in store
Whose heed is hole, and sayth that it is sore
His fayned chere, is harde to kepe in mewe
But thought, whyche is vnfayned euermore
The wordes preueth, as the workes shewe

La dame.

Loue is subtel, and hath a great awayte
Sharpe i working, i gabbing great plesaūce
And can him venge, of suche as by dysceyte
Wold sele and know, his secrete gouernaūce
And maketh hem to obey his ordynaunce
By chereful wayes, as in hem is supposed
But whan they fal in to repentaunce
Than in a rage, her counsayle is disclosed

Lamant.

Sith for as moche, as god and eke nature
Hath auaunced loue, to so hye degre
Moche sharpe is the poynt, thus am I sure
Yet greueth more the faute, where euer it be
Who hath no colde, of heate hath no deynte
The one for that other, asked is expresse
And of plesaunce, knoweth non certeyne
But it be one, in thought and heuynesse

La dame.

As for plesaunce, it is nat alway one
That you thike swete, I thike it bitter payne
Ye may nat me cōstrayne, nor yet rigin none
After your lust to loue, that is but vayne
To chalenge loue by right, was neuer seyne
But herte assent, before bonde and promyse
For strength and force, may not attayne
A wyf that standeth enfeffed in fraunchyse

Lamant.

Right fayre lady, god mote I neuer please
Yf I seke other right in this case
But for to shewe you playnly my dysease
And your mercy to abyde, & eke your grace
If I purpose your honour to deface
Or euer dyd, god and fortune me shende
And that I neuer vnryghtfully purchace
One onely toye, vnto my lyues ende

La dame.

Ye and other, that I were suche othes fast
And so condempne, and curse en to and fro
Ful sykerly ye wene your othes last
No lenger than the wordes ben ago
And god, and eke his sayntes laughe also
In suche swerying, there is no stedfastnesse
And these wretches that haue ful trust therto
After they wepe and waylen in distresse

Lamant.

He hath no corage of a man trewly
That secheth plesaunce, worthyp to dispyse
Nor to be called forth, is not worthy
The erth to touche, ꝑ ayre in no kyns wyse
A trusty hert, a mouth without feynteyse

Thus

Thus by the strength of euery manet dame
And who that layeth hys fayth for lytel prise
Preiseth bothe his worthyp and hys fame

La dame

A cursed herte, a mouth that is curteyse
Ful wel ye wote they be not accordynge
Yet fayned chere, right sone may hem apeyse
Where of malyce is set al her worksynge
Ful false semblant they bere, & true semynge
Pernaine, her fame, her tonges but fayned
Worthyp in hem is put in forgetynge
Nought repented, nor in no wise complained

L amant.

Who thynketh yl, no good may hym befal
God of his grace graunt eche man his desert
But for hys loue, amonge your thoughtes al
Isthynke vpon my woful sorowes smert
For of my payne, whether your tender hert
Effecte pite, be not therwith agreued
And of your grace, to me were discouert
That by your meane, sone shuld I be releued

La dame.

Alightsome hert, a folly of pleasaunce
Are muche better the lesse whyle they abyde
They make you thinke, & brig you in a traūce
But that sickenesse, wyl sone be remedyde
Respite your thought, and put al this asyde
Ful good disporte wereth me al day
To helpe nor hurt, my wyl is nat apiyde
Who rowerth me nat, I let hem passe away

L amant.

Who hath a bryde, a faucon, or a hounde
That folowerth hym for loue in euery place
He chertsheth hym, & kepeth hym tul sounde
Out of his syght, he wyl not hym enchace
And I that set my wittes in thys case
On you alone, without en any chaūge
Im put vnder, moche farther out of grace
And lesse set by, than other that be straunge

La dame.

Though I make chere to euery man about
For my worthyp, & for myne owne trauchyse
To you I wyl do so, without en doute
In eschewinge al manet pretudyse
For wote ye wel, loue is so lytel wyse
And in brieue, so lyghtly wyl be brought
That he taketh al at hys owne deuyse
Of thyng god wote, ỹ serueth him of nought

L amant.

Yf I by loue, and by my true seruyse
Lese good chere ỹ straungers haue alway
Wherof shal serue my trouth in any wise
Lesse than to hym, that cometh & goth alday
Whiche holdeth of you nothyng, ỹ is no nay
Also in you is lost, as to my semynge
Al curtesy, whiche of reason wyl say
That loue for loue, were lawful restrynge

La dame.

Curtesye is alwey wonder nere
To worthyp, whiche him loueth tenderly
And he wyl not be bounde for no prayere
Nor for no gyftes, I say you verely
But this good chere, departe ful largely
Where hym lyketh, as hys conseyte wyl fal
Guerdon constrayned a gyfte don thankfully
These twayn cāneuer acorde nor neuer shal

L amant.

As for guerdon I seke none in this case
For that desert, to me is to hye
Wherfore I aske your pardone & your grace
Sith me behoueth de the, of your mercy
To gyue the good where it wanteth truely
That were reason, and a curteyse manere
And to your owne much better were worthy
Thā to straūgers, to whome ye hem lowely chere

La dame.

What calye good, farm wolde I that I wold
That pleaseth one, another smerteth sore
But of his owne, to large is he that wyl
Gyue much, and lese his good name therfore
Ore shulde not make a graunt, lytel ne more
But the requeste were right wel according
Yf worthyp be not kepte and set before
All that is lefte, is but a lytel thynge

L amant.

Into this worlde was founden neuer none
Nor vnder heuen creature yborne
Nor neuer shal, saue onely your persone
To who your worthyp toucheth halfe so sore
But me whiche haue no reason to lese nor more
Of youthe be age, but wyl in your seruyce
I haue no eyen, no wit, nor mouth in store
But al be gyuen to the same office

La dame.

A ful great charge hath he without en fayle
That his worthyp kepeth in syckernesse
But in daunger he setteth hys trauayle
That setteth it with others buysynesse
To hym that longeth honour and nobleye
Vpon none other shulde nat be awayte
For of his owne, so muche hath he the lesse
That of other, muche foloweth the conceyte

L amant.

Your eyen hath set ỹ prise, which that I fele
Within my hert, that where so euer I go
Yf I do thynge, that sowneth vnto wele

Nedes must it come from you, a fro no mo
Fortune wyl this, that I for wele or wo
My lyfe endure, your mercy abydinge
And very right wyl, that I thinke also
Of your worthyp, aboue al other thinge

La dame

To your worthyp se wel, for that is nede
That ye spende not your season al in vayne
As touchyng myn, I rede you take no hede
By your folly, to put your selfe in payne
To ouercome is good, and to restrayne
In herte, whiche is discerned follyly
For worse it is to breake than bowe certayne
Better bowe, than to fal sodaynly

Lamant.

Nowe fayre lady thinke, sith it first began
That loue hath set myne hert vnder his cure
Je mercy might, ne truely I ne can
None other serue, whyle I shal here endure
In most fre wyse, therof I make you sure
Which may not be withdraw, this is no nay
I must abyde al maner aduenture
For I may neither put to nor take away

La dame.

I holde it for no gyfte in sothfastnesse
That one offereth, where it is forsake
For suche a gyft is abandonyng expresse
That with worthyp ayen may not be take
He hath an herte ful fel that lyste to make
A gyfte lightly, that put is to refuse
But he is wyse, that such conceyte wil slake
So that hym nede, neither to studye ne muse

Lamant.

He shulde not muse, y hath his seruice spent
On her, whiche is a lady honourable
And if I spende my tyme to that entent
Yet at the lest, I am not reprouable
Of fayned herte, to thinke I am vnable
Or I mistoke, whan I made this request
By whiche loue hath of enterprise notable
So many hertes gotten by conquest

La dame.

If that ye lyste do after my counsayle
Seche a fayrer, and of more higher fame
Whiche in seruice of loue, wyl you preuayle
After your thought, accordyng to the same
He hurteth bothe his worthyp & his name
That follyly, for thayn hi selfe wyl trouble
And he also leseth his after game
That surely can not set his poynes double

Lamant.

This your counsayle, by ought that I can se
Is better sayd than done, to myne aduyse
Though I beleue it not, forgeue it me
Myn hert is suche, so hole without feynyng
That I ne may geue credence in no wyse
To thing, which is not sownyng vnto truth
Other counsayle I se, be but fantasye
Saue of your grace, to the we pyte and ruth

La dame.

I holde hym wyse that worketh no foly
And whan hym lyst, can leue and part therfro
But in conning, he is to lerne tre wyly
That wolde hym selfe conduite, & can not so
And he that wil not after counsayle do
His sute he putteth in to disperaunce
And al the good that shulde fal him to
Is lost and deed, clene out of remembraunce

Lamant.

Yet wol I shewe this matter faythfully
Whyles I lyue, what euer be my chaunce
And if it hap, that in my truthe I dye
Than deth shal do me no displesaunce
But whan that I, by your harde suffraunce
Shal dye so true, and with so great a payne
Yet shal it do me moche the lesse grenaunce
Than for to lyue a false louer certayne

La dame.

Of me get ye right nought, this is no fable
I wyl to you be neither harde nor straye
And right wyl, not no man customable
To thynke ye shulde, be sure of my conceyte
Who seketh sorowe, his be the receyte
Other counsayle can I not fele nor se
Nor for to lerne, I cast me not to awayte
Who wyl therof, let hym assay for me

Lamant.

Ones must it be assayde, that is no nay
With suche as be of reputacion
And of true loue, the right honour to pay
Of fre hertes gotten by dewe raunsome
For fre wyl holdeth this opynion
That it is great duresse and discomforte
To kepe a herte in so straye a prison
That hath out one body for his disporte

La dame.

I knowe so many causes meruaylous
That I must nede of reason thynke certayne
That suche auenture is wonder perylous
And yet wel more, the comyng backe agayne
Good or worthip, therof is seldome sene
Where I ne wyl make suche aray
As for to fynde a plesaunce, but a barayne
Whan it shal cost so dere the first assay

Lamant.

Ye haue no cause to dout of this mater

for you to meue with no suche fantasyse
To put me farre al out as a straunger
for your goodnesse can thinke & wel aduise
That I haue made aprise in euery wise
By whiche my truthe shewth open euidence
By longe abydynge, and my trewe seruice
May wel be knowen by playne experience

La dame.

Of very ryght he may be called trewe
And so muste he be take in euery place
That can discerne, and let as he ne knewe
And kepe the good, if he it may purchase
for who that prayeth, or swereth in any case
Right wel ye wote, in ꝑ no trouth is preued
Suche hath there ben, and are, ꝑ getten grace
And lese it sone, whan they haue it acheued

Lamant.

If truthe me caule, by vertue soueraine
To shewe good loue, & alway fynde contrary
And cherishe ꝑ, which sleeth me with ꝑ payne
This is to me a souely aduersary
Whan ꝑ pyte, which longe on slepe doth tary
Hath set the fyne of al my heuynesse
Yet her comforte to me moste necessary
Shal set my wyl more sure in stablenesse

La dame.

Che woful wight, what may he thinke or say
Che contary of al toye and gladnesse
Is che body, hys thought is alway
from hem that felen no sore nor sickenesse
Thus hurtes ben of dyuers busynesse
Whiche loue hath put to great hyndraunce
And truthe also, put in forgetfulnesse
Whan they ful sore begyn to syghe askaunce

Lamant.

Now god defende, but he be harmlesse
Of al worthyp or good that may befal
That to werst tourneth by hys lewdnesse
Ayfte of grace, or any thynge at al
That hys lady vouchesafe vpon him cal
Or cherisheth hym in honourable wyse
In that defaute, what euer he be that fal
Deserueth more than deth to suffre twyse

La dame.

There is no fuge yfette an suche trespace
By which of right, loue may recouered be
One curseth fast, another dothe manace
Yet dyeth none, as farre as I can se
But kepe her course alway in one degre
And euer more, their labour doth encrease
To bring ladyes by their great subteite
for others gylte, in sorowe and disease

Lamant.

Al be it so, one dothe so great offence
And is not deed, nor put to no iustyce
Right wel I wot hym gayneth no defence
But he muste endure ful mischeuous wyse
And al euer sayd, god wot hym dispyse
for falsheed is ful of cursednesse
That his worthyp may neuer haue ẽterprise
Where it reygneth, & hath the wylfulnesse

La dame

Of that haue they no great fere nowe a dayse
Such as wyl say and mayntayne it thertto
That stedfast truthe is nothing for to prayse
In hem that kepe it longe in wele or wo
Their busy hertes passen to and fro
They be so wel reclaymed to the lure
So wel lerned hem to withholde also
And al to chaũge, whe loue shuld best endure

Lamant.

Whan one hath set his herte in stable wise
In suche a place, as is bothe good and trewe
He shulde not flyt, but be forth hys seruice
Alway withouten chaunge of any newe
As sone as loue begynneth to remewe
Al plesaunce gothe anone in lyte spare
As for my partie that shal I eschewe
Whyle the soule abydeth in hys place

La dame.

To loue truely, there as it ought of right
Ye may not be mystaken doutelesse
But ye be soule disceyued in your syght
By lyght vnderstandynge, as I gesse
Yet may ye wel repele your busynesse
And to reason haue some attendaunce
Both better than to abide by foly slumbrynes
Che feble socour of disperaunce

Lamant.

Reason, counsayle, wysedome, & good aduyse
Ben vnder loue areted euerychone
To whiche I can accorde in euery wise
for they be not rebel, but lyf as a bone
Their wyl and myne, be medled al in one
And therwith bounden with so strong a chayne
That as in hem, departynge shal be none
But pyte breake the mighty bonde atwayne

La dame

Ye lone not your selfe, what euer ye be
That in loue stande forgette in euery place
And of your wo, if ye haue no pyte
Others pyte byleue ye not to purchace
But be fully assured, as in thys case
I am alway vnder one ordynaunce
To haue better trust not after grace
And al that leueth, take to your plesaunce

Lamant

L amant.

I haue my hope so sure and so stedfast
That suche a lady shulde not lacke pyte
But nowe alas, it is shyt vp so fast
That daūger sheweth on me his cruelte
And if she se the vertue farye in me
Ferme seruice, though she do faryle also
No wonder were, but this is my sorete
I must suffre, whiche way that euer it go

La dame.

Leue this purpose I rede you for the best
For the lenger ye kepe, it is in vayne
The lesse ye gette, as of your hertes rest
And to retreve it shal you neuer attayne
Whan ye abide good hope to make you faine
Ye shal be founde assoted in dotage
And in the ende, ye shal knowe for certayne
Hope shal pay the wretches for her wage

L amant.

Ye say as falleth most for your plesaunce
And your power is great, al thys I se
But hope shall neuer out of my remēbraunce
By whiche I fele so great aduersyte
For whan nature hath set in you plente
Of al goodnesse, by vertue and by grace
He neuer assembled hem, as semed me
To put pyte out of hys dwellyng place

L a dame.

Pyte of right ought to be resonable
And to no wight do no great displesaūtage
There as is nede, it shulde be profytable
And to the pitous shewing no domage
If a lady wyl do so great outrage
To shewe pyte and cause her owne debate
Of suche pyte cometh dispitous rage
And of suche loue, also right deedly hate

L amant.

To comforte hem that lyue al comfortelesse
That is no harme, but cōforte to your name
But ye that haue a herte of suche duresse
And a fayre lady I muste affirme the same
If I durst say, ye winne al thys defame
By cruelte, whiche sitteth you ful yl
But if pyte, whiche may al this attame
In your high herte may rest and tary styl

L a dame,

What euer he be that sayth he loueth me
And paraventure I leue wel it be so
Ought he be wroth, or shulde I blamed be
Though I dyd not as he wolde haue me do
If I medled with suche or other mo
It might be called pyte mercyteslesse
And afterwarde if I shulde lyue in wo
Than to repent, it were to late I gesse

L amant.

O marble herte, and yet more harde parde
Whiche mercy may not perce for no labour
More stronge to bowe than is a mighty tre
What auayleth you to shewe so great rigour
Pleaseth it you more to se me dye this hour
Before your eyen, for your disporte and play
Than for to shewe some comforte a socour
To respyte brethe, whiche chaseth me alway

L a dame.

Of your disease, ye may haue allegeaunce
And as for myne, I let it ouer slake
Also ye shal not dye for my plesaunce
Nor for your heale, I can no surety make
I wyl not hurte my selfe for others sake
Wepe they, laugh they, or sing they, I wate
For this mater, so wyl I vndertake
That none of hem shal make therof auaunt

L amant.

I can not skyl of loue by god alone
I haue more cause to wepe in your presence
And wel ye wote, auaūtour am I none
For certaynly, I loue better silence
Eue shulde not loue by his hertes credence
But he were sure to kepe it secretly
For a baunsour is of no reuerence
Whan that his tonge is his most enemy

L a dame. (ment

Male bouche in courte, hath great cōmaunde
Che man studieth to say the worst he may
These false louers, in this tyme now present
They serue best to iangle as a Jay
The most secrete ywis, yet some men say
Do one be mystrusted is in some partie
Therfore to ladies whan so mē speke or say
It shulde be byleued in no wyse

L amant.

Of good and yl shal be, and is alway
The worlde is suche, þ̄ perthe is not al playne
Ther þ̄ be good, þ̄ prose sheweth euery day
And other wyse great vilony certayne
It is reason, thoughe one his tonge disdayne
With cursed speche, to do hym selfe a shame
That suche refuse, shuld wrōgfully remaine
Upon the good renomed in their fame

L a dame. (newe

Suche as be nought, whā they here tidinges
That eche trespas shal lightly haue pardon
They that pursuen to be good and trewe
Wyl not set by none yl disposicyon
To contynue in euery good condicyon
They are the first that fallen in domage

And

And ful freely the hertes habandon
Colyrel sayth, with sotte and sayre langage

Lamant.

Nowe knowe I wel of very certaynte
If one do truely, yet shal he be shente
Sith al maner of iustyce and pyte
Is banished out of a ladies entente
Iean not se, but al is at one stente
The good, the yl, the vice, & eke the vertue
Suche as be good, such haue the punyshmẽt
For the trespace of hem that lyue vntrue

La dame.

I haue no power you to do greuaunce
Nor to punishe none other creature
But to eschewe the more encombraunce
To kepe vs from you al, I holde it sure
False semblaunce, hath a face ful demure
Lightly to catche these ladyes in a wayte
Wherfore we must, if we wyl here endure
Take right good watch, lo this is my cõcette

La mant.

Sith that of grace, a goodly worde nor one
Nay nowe be had, but alway kepte in store
Sappele to god, for he may here my mone
Of the dureste, whiche greueth me so sore
And of pyte, I complayne furthermore
Whiche he forgate, in al his ordinaunce
Or els my lyfe to haue ended before
Whiche so soone am put out of remẽbraunce

La dame.

My herte nor I, haue done you no forfette
By whiche ye shulde complayne in any kinde
Nothing hurteth you, but your owne conceyte
Deuyse your selfe, for so ye shal it fynde
Thus alway let this synke in your mynde
That your desire shal neuer recouered be
Yenoy me sore, in wastyng al this wynde
For I haue sayd ynough, as semeth me

Lamant

This woful man rose vp in al his payne
And so departed with weping countenaunce
His woful herte, almost to brast in twayne
Ful lyke to dye, walkyng forth in a traunce
And sayd dethe come forth, thy selfe auaunce
Or that myn herte forgete hys properte
And make shorter al this woful penaunce
Of my poore lyfe, ful of aduersite

Forthes he went, but whither wil I nought
Nor to what parte he drewe in sothfastnesse
But he no more was in his ladyes thought
For to the daunce anone she gan her dresse
And afterwarde, one tolde me thus expresse
Her tent his heer, for anguishe and for payne
And in hym selfe toke so great heuynesse
That he was deed within a day or twayne

¶ Lenuoy.

The true louers thus I beseche you al
Such auẽtures dye hem in euery wyse
And as people defamed ye hem cal
For they truely do you great preiudice
His castelles stronge stuffed with ordinaunce
For they haue had longe tyme by their office
The hole countre of loue in obeysaunce

And ye ladies, or what estate ye be
Of whom worthynesse hath chose his dwellyng
For goddes loue do no suche cruelte
Nor in no wyse ne foule not the trace
Of her that here is named by your wyse
Whiche by reason me semeth in this case
May be called, La belle dame sans mercy.

Colyrel boke, god sende the good passage
Where well thy way, be symple of maner
Take thy clothyng belyke thy pilgremage
And specially let this be thy prayere
Vnto hem al, that they wyl rede or here
Where thou art wrong after her plesyr to cal
The to correcte in any parte or al

Pray hem also with thyne humble reuerence
Thy boldnesse to pardon in this case
For els thou arte not able in no wyse
To make thy selfe appeare in any place
And furthermore beseche hem of her grace
By her fauour and supportacyon
To take in gre this rude translacyon

The whiche god wote standeth ful dessemure
Of eloquence, of meter, and colours
Lyke as a bell naked without reture
Vpon a playne to abyde al maner showers
I can no more, but aske of hem socours
At whose request I were made in this wise
Cõmaundynge me with body and seruise

Right thus I make an ende of this prolles
Werebynge hym, that al hath in balaunce
That no true man be herd causelesse
As this man was, which is of remembraunce
And al that done her faythful obseruaunce
And in her trouth purpose hem to endure
I pray god sende hem better auenture.

¶ Explicit.

Of quene Annelida and false Arcite,

Thou fiers God of armes Mars the rede
That in thy frosty countre called Trace
Within thy grysly temples ful of drede
Honoured art as patron of that place
With the Bellona Pallas ful of grace
Be present, and my songe continue and dyr
At my begynnyng thus to the I crye

For it ful depe is sonken in myndc
With pytous herte in Englyche to endite
This olde storie, in latyn whiche I fynde
Of quene Annelida and false Arcite
That elde, whiche al can frete and byte
And it hath freten many a noble story
Hath nigh devoured out of our memory

Be favourable eke thou Polymnia
On Pernaso that hath thy sisters glade
By Elycon, not farre from Cirrha
Syngest with voyce memorial in the shade
Under the laurer, whiche that may not fade
And do that I my shyp to haven wynne
First followe I Stace, and after hym Corinne

Jamq; domos patrias Cithie post aspera gentis, Prelia laurigero subigerente Thesea curru Lenifice plausus missusq; ad sidera vulgi

When Theseus with warres longe and grete
The aspre folke of Cithe hath overcome
The laurer crowned in his chayre golde bete
Home to his countre houses is prome
For whiche the people blisful al and some
So cryden, that to the sterres it wente
And hym to honouren dyd al her entente

Before this duke, in signe of victorie
The trompes come, and in his baner large
The ymage of Mars, and in token of glorie
Men might se of tresour many a charge
Many a bright helme, and many a spere and targe
Many a fresche knight, and many a blisful route
On horse and on foote, in al the felde aboute

Ipolyta his wyfe, the hardy quene
Of Cithya, that he conquered had
With Emelie her yonge suster shene
Fayre in a chare of golde he with hym lad
That al the croude about her chare she spradde
With brightnesse of beautie in her face
Fulfylled of largesse and of grace

With his triumphe and laurer corowned thus
In al the floure of fortunes yeuyng
Lete I this noble prince Theseus
Towarde Athenes in his way rydyng
And fonde I wol in shortly to bring
The sye way of that I gan to write
Of quene Annelida and false Arcite

Mars that through his furious course of yre
The olde wrathe of Juno to fulfyl
Hath set the peoples hertes both on fyre
Of Thebes and Grece, and eueriche other to kyl
With blody speares rested neuer styl (bothe
But throng now here now there amõge hem
That euerich other slew, so were they wroth

For whan Amphiorax and Tydeus
Ipomedon, and Partynope also
Were dede, and slayne proude Campaneus
And whan that wretched The bans brethré two
Were slayne, and kyng Adrastus home ago
So desolate stode Thebes and so bare
That no wight coude remedy of his care

And whan the olde Creon gan espye
Howe that the blode royal was brought adoun
He helde the eyre by his tyrannye
And dyd the genryls of that regioun
To ben his frendes, and dwel in the toun
So what for love of hym, and what for awe
The noble folke were to the towne ydrawe

Amonge al these Annelyda the quene
Of Ermonye, was in that towne dwellynge
That fayrer was than the sonne shene
Throughout that world so gan her name springe
That her to se had every wight lykyng
For as of trouthe is there none her lyche
Of al the women in this worlde ryche

Yonge was this quene, of twenty yere olde
Of myddle stature, and of suche fayrenesse
That nature had a joye her to beholde
And for to speken of her stedfastnesse
She passed hath Penelope, and Lucresse

And

And shortly if she shal ben comprehended
Iuher myght nothynge ben amended

This Theban knyght eke sothe to sayne
Was yonge, and therto withal a lusty knight
But he was double in loue, and thing playne
And subtyl in that craft ouer any wyght
And with his conuyng wan this lady bright
For so forforth he gan her trouth assure
That she him trusteth ouer any creature

What should I sayne, she loueth Arcyte so
That whan that he was absent any throwe
Anon her thought her herte brast a two
For in her syght to her he bare him lowe
So that she wende haue al his herte yknowe
But he was false, it nas but fayned chere
As nedeth not suche crafte men to lere

But neuertheles ful mykel besynesse
Had he, er that he might his lady wynne
And swore he wolde dyen for distresse
Ofrom his wyfe he sayd he wolde twynne
Alas the whyle, for it was routhe and synne
That she vpon his forowes wolde rewe
But nothig thinketh the false as doth ȳ trewe

Her fredom founde Arcyte in suche manere
That al was his, that she hath mocht or lyre
Ne to no creature made she chere
Further than it lyked to Arcyte
There was no lacke, with which he might her
She was so forforth yeuen him to please
That al that lyked him, dyd her ease

There nas to her no maner letter sent
That touched loue, from any maner wight
That she ne shewed him or it was brent
So playne she was, and dyd her ful might
That she myght hyde nothing from her knight
Lelle he of any vntrouthe her vpbreyde
Without bode his herte she obeyde

And eke he made him talous ouer her
That what that any man had to her sayde
Anon he wolde prayen her to lete
What was ȳ worde, or make him yuel apaide
Than wede she out of her wytte haue braide
But al was but sleight and flaterye
Without loue he fayned ielouye

And al this toke she so debonairly
That al his wyl, her thought it thylful thyng
And euer the lenger she loued him tenderly
And dyd him honour as he were a kyng
Her herte was to him wedded with a tyng
For so forforth vpon trouthe is her entrut
That where he gothe, her herte with him went

What she shal care, on him is to her thought
That wel vnneth of ought care toke she kepe
And whan she was to her self brought
On him she thought al war ther she slepe
Whan he was absent, prively bothe day and nyght
Thus lyueth fayre Anneyda the quene
For false Arcyte, that dyd her al this tene

This false Arcyte, of tirs ne fangle he
For he to him so lowly was and trewe
Toke lesse deynte for her drednesse
And sawe another lady proude and newe
And right anon he clad him in her hewe
Wote I not whether in whyte, reed or grene
And falsed fayre Anneyda the quene

But neuertheles, great wonder was it neuer
Though he were false, for it is yore ago
Sythe Lameth was, thatte so longe agone
To be in loue as false as euer he was
He was the first father that began
To louen two, and was in bigamye
And he founde termes first, but it many lye

This false Arcyte, somwhat must he fayne
Whan he was false, to couere his traytrye
Right as an horse, ȳ can both bite and playne
For he bare her in honde of treuthe
And swore he coude her doublenesse ese
And al was falsnesse that she to him mene
thus swore this thefe, and forth his way he nam

Alas, what herte might endure
For routhe or wo, her sorowe to reherse
Or what man hath the conyng or the myght
Or what man might within a chambre dyse
If I to him rehersen shal the bel
That suffreth fayre Anneyda the quene
For false Arcyte, that dyd al this tene

She weepeth, wayleth, swouneth proudly
To grounde deed the tailer has a stone
Crampissheth her lymmes crokedly
She speketh as her wytte were al agone
Other colour than as then hath she none
Ne none other worde speketh she moche or lyte
But mercy cruel herte myn Arcyte

And thus endureth,tyll that she was so mate
That she ne hath foote,on which she may su-
But forth lāguyshig euer in this estate (stene
Of which Arcyte hath neyther rothe ne tene
His hert was els where newe and grene
That on her wo,ne demeth him not to thinke
Him recketh neuer whether she sterue or synke

This newe lady holdeth him so narowe
Up by the bridel,at the staues ende
That euery worde he diedit as an arowe
Her daunger made him both bowe & bende
And as her luste,made him turne or wende
For she ne graunted him in her lyuyng
No grace,why that he hath to synge

But drour him forthe, vnneth wist her knowe
That he was seruaunt vnto her ladyshyp
But lesse he were proude, she helde him lowe
Thus serueth he,without mēde or syp
She serue him nowe to lande,& nowe to shyp
And for she vaucht him daunger al his lyf
Therfore she had him at her owne wyl

Ensample of this,ye thrifty women al
Take hede of Anneiyda and false Arcyte
That for her lyst him, her dere herte cal
And was so meke,therfore he loued her lyte
The kynde of mannes herte is to deuyse
Euything that straunge is,also god me saue
For what they may not get,ỹ wold they haue

Nowe turne we to Anneiyda ayen
That pyneth day by day in langwishyng
But whan she sawe that her ne gate no geyn
Upon a day ful sorowfully wepyng
She cast her for to make a complaynyng
And with her owne hande she gan to wryte
And sente it to her Theban knight Arcyte.

¶ The complaynt of Anneiyda to false Arcyte.

SOthryled with the poynt of
remembraunce
The swerde of sorowe,whet
with false plesaunce
Myn herte bare of blysse,and
blacke of hewe
That turned is to quakyng al my daunce
My semette in a waped countenaunce
Sens it auayleth nought to bentrewe
For who so trewe is,it shall her rewe
That serueth loue,and doth her obseruaūce
Alway to one,and chaungeth for no newe

I wote my selfe as wel as any wight
For I loued one,with al myn hert and might
More than my selfe,an hūdred thousāde sith
And called him my hertes lyfe,my knight
And was al his,as ferre as it was right
And whan ỹ he was glad,than was I blithe
And his disease was my dethe as swythe
And he ayen,his trouthe hath me plight
For euermore his lady me to kythe

Nowe is he false alas,and causeles
And of my wo he is so routhles
That with a worde him lyst not ones dayne
To bring ayen my sorowful herte in pees
For he is caught vp in an other lees
Right as him lyst he laugheth at my payne
And I ne can myn herte not restrayne
For to loue him yet alway neuertheles
And of al this I not to whom to playne

And thu'de I playne,alas the harde stounde
Unto my foe,that yaue myn herte a wounde
And yet desyreth that myn harme be more
Nowe certes ferther wot I neuer be founde
None other helpe,my sores for to founde
My desteny hath shaped so ful sore
I wot none other medcyne ne lore
I wot ben aye there I was ones bounde
That I haue sayd,be sayd for euermore

Alas,where is become your gentylnesse
Your wordes ful of plesaunce & humblesse
Your obseruaunce in so lowe maniere
Your awayting,and your besynesse
On me,that ye called your maystresse
Your soueraine lady in this worlde here
Alas,is there neyther worde ne chere
Ye vouchsafe vpon myn heuynesse
Alas your loue, I dyre it al to dere

Nowe certes swete,though that ye
Thus causeles the cause be
Of my deedlye aduersyte
Your manly reason ought it to respyte
To slee your foende,and namely me
That neuer yet in no degre
Offended you,as wisly he
That al wote,of wo my soule quyte

But for I was so playne Arcyte

In al my workes moche and lyte
And was so besy you to beryte
Myne honour saue, meke, kynde, and fre
Therfore ye put in me this wyte
Alas, ye recche not a myte
Though that the swerde of sorowe byte
My wofull hert, throughe your crueltie

My swete foe, why do ye so forchaine
And thynke ye that furtherd be your name
To loue a newe, and ben untrewe aye
And put you in slaunder nowe and blame
And do to me aduersyte and graine
That loue you most, god thou wost alwaye
Yet turne ayen, and yet be playne some daye
And than shal this ỹ now is mys ben game
And al forgeue, while I lyue maye

Lo here myne, al this is forto sayne
Is whether shal I praye or els playne
Which is the way to done you to be trewe
For eyther mote I haue you in my chayne
Or with the deth ye mote departe vs twayne
There be the none other meane wayes newe
For god so wysely on my soule rewe
As verely ye slayne me with the payne
That nowe ye se on sayned on mine hewe

For thus forforth haue I my derth sought
My selfe I murder with my privy thought
For sorowe and routh of your unkyndnesse
I wepe, I wayle, I fast, al helpeth naught
I boyde for that is to speke of aught
I boyde company, I dye gladnesse
Who may auaunt her better of heynesse
Than I, sith to this plite haue ye me brought
Without gylte, me nedeth no wytnesse

And shuld I pray, sith wreuen womanhede
Nay rather deth, than do so foule a dede
And aske mercy and gyltelesse, what nede
And if I playne what lyte I spede
You recketh not, that know I out of drede
And if I unto you myne othes bede
For myne excuse, a scorne shal be my mede
Your chere sheweth, but it wol not spede
Ful longe agon I might haue taken hede

For though I had you to morowe againe
I myght as wel holde April from rayne
As holde you to maken stedfast
Almyghty god, of trouthe the soueraygne
Wher is the trouth of man, who hath no shame
She that hem loueth, shall hem fynde as fast
As in a tempest is a rotten mast
Is that a beme beryd, that is aye fayne
To renne away, whan he is fett agayn

O wo me wrecche, wher shal I wyfully
Haue I aught sayd out of the way
I not, my wytte is al away
I face as doth the foule of chaunteplure
For nowe I playne, and nowe I pley
I am so mased that I dey
Arcyte hath borne away the key
Of al my worth, and my good auenture

For in this world there nys no creature
Of alkyns in more discomfyture
Than I me more sorowe endure
For if I slepe a furlonge way or there
Than me sheth me that your figure
Before me stante clad in armure
Eke to profre a newe aflure
For to be a trewe, and mercy me to pray

The long nyght, this wonder fyght I thynke
That on the day for fuche affray I dyde
And of al this right nought ne wyl remembre
Of newe more myne eyen thus ben dased
And to your routh as to your reuth I trust
But welaway, to feble ben the fresshe
Thus holdeth me my destenye in bryde
But me to rede out of this drede is gode
Or may my wyt, so wreaste is out of frame

Than rede I thus, sythe I may to myne
I yeue it up for nowe and euer more
For I shal neuer eft purchase grace
Ne sykernesse, me leeme of loue the lore
But as the swan, I haue herde say tofore
Ayenst his deth wel lyng in his penaunce
So synge I here the deseruere and chaunce
That me that Arcyte Annelida fo sore
Hath thralled in the payne of cruel bondage

Whan that Annelida this wofull auenture
Hath of her hande writen in this wyse
With face ded, bothe ye pale and grene
She fel a swoune, and lyth there gan lyse
And vnto Pallas auoweth sacrifyse
Within the temple, with a sorowful chere
That Troyen was, as ye may playnly here.

Explicit

Cccu The

The assemble of ladyes

IN Septembre at the fallynge
of the lefe
The freshe season was altogi-
der doon
And of the corne was gathe-
red the theefe
In a gardyne aboute t wayne after noone
Ther were ladies walkig, as was her woone
Foure in numbre, as to my mynde doth fal
And I the fyfthe, the symplest of hem al

Of gentyl women fayre there were also
Disportyng hem, euerych after her gyse
In crosse aleys walkyng by two and two
And some alone, after her fantasyse
Thus occupyed we were in dyuerse wyse
And yet in trouthe we were not al alone
There were knyghtes & squires many one

Wherof I serued, one of hem asked me
I sayd ayen, as it fel in my thought
To walke aboute the mase in certaynte
As a woman that nothyng rought
He asked me ayen whom ther I sought
And of my colour, why I was so pale
For sothe, qd I, and therby lythe a tale

That must me wete, qd he & that anone
Tell on let se, and make no tarryeng
Abyde qd I ye ben a hasty one
I lete you wete it is no lytel thyng
But for bycause ye haue a great longyng
In your desyre, this processe for to here
I shal you tel the playne of this matere

It happed thus, that in an after noone
My felawshyp and I by one assent
When al other besynesses were doone
To passe our tyme, into this mase we went
And toke our wayes, eche after our entent
Some wēt inward, & went they had gon out
Some stode in the myd, & loked all about

And soth to say, some were ful feere behynde
And right anon as forforthe as the best
Other there were so mased in her mynde
Alwayes were good for hem both est & west
Thus went they forth, and had but lytel rest
And some her courage dyd hem sore assayle
For very wraethe, they dyd step ouer ꝓ rayle

And as they sought hem selfe to and fro
I gate my selfe a lytel auauntage
Al for wery'd, I might no further go
Though I had won right great for my biage
So came I forth in to a strayte passage
Which brought me to an herber faire & greue
Made with benches ful craftyly and cleane

That as me thought, there myght no creature
Deuise a better, by due proporcioun
Safe it was closed wel I you ensure
With masonrye, of compace enuyroun
Ful secretly with stayres goyng down
In myddes ꝑ place, wt turning whele certain
And vpon that a potte of Margelayne

With margerettes growyng in ordynaūce
To hewe hem selfe, as folke went to & fro
That to beholde it was a great plesaunce
And how they were accompanyed with mo
Ne momblysnesse and sonenesse also
The poure penses were not disloged there
Ne god wote her place was euery where

The flore & bench was paued fayre & smothe
With stones square, of many dyuers hewe
So wel ioyned, that for to say the sothe
Al semed one, that none other knewe
And vndereneth the streames newe and newe
As syluer bryght, springyng in such a wyse
That whence it came, ye coude it not deuyse

A lytel whyle was I al alone
Beholdyng wel this delectable place
My felawshyp were comyng euerychone
So must we nedes abyde for a space
Remembring of many dyuers cāce
Of tyme passed, with syghes depe
I set me downe, and there I fel a slepe

And as I slept, me thought there came to me
A gentyl woman, metely of stature
Of great worshyp she semed for to be
Atyred wel, not hygh but by mesure
Her countenaunce ful sade and demure
Her colours blewe, al that she had vpon
There came no mo but her selfe alone

Her

her gowne wel was enbraudred certainly
with stones after her owne deuyse
In her purfyl, her worde by and by
(Sienet loyalment) as I coude deuyse
Than prayde I her many maner wyse
That of her name I might haue remembraūce
She sayd she was called Perfeuerauunce.

So furthermore to spekē was I bolde
where she dwelled, I prayed her for to say
And she agayne ful curtesly me tolde
My dwellyng is, and hath be many a day
With a lady: what lady I you pray
Of great estate, thus warne I you (qō she)
What cal ye her? her name is Loyalte

In what office stande ye, or in what degre
(Qō I to her that wold I were right fayne
I am quod she vnworthy though I be
Ether chambre her butsher in certayne
This rodde I beare, as for a token playne
Lyke as ye knowe the rule in suche seruyce
Apertaynyng is to the same office.

She charged me by her commaundement
To warne you, and your felawes euerychone
That ye shulde come there as she is present
For a counsayle, whiche shall be nowe anone
Or seuen dayes be comen and gone
And furthermore, she bad that I shulde say
Excuse there might be none nor delay

Another thyng was not forget behynde
Whiche in no wyse I wolde but ye knewe
Remembre wel, and beare it in your mynde
If your felawes and ye muste come in blewe
Ouerlyche able, your maters for to sewe
With more, whiche I pray you thinke vpon
Your wordes on your selues euerychon

And be not abasshed in no maner wyse
Ye many ben, in suche an high presence
Make your request, as ye can best deuyse
And she gladly wol yeue you audyence
Here is no grefe, nor no maner offence
Wherin ye fele that your herte is displeased
But with her help, right sone ye shal be eased

I am right glad quod I ye tel me this
But there is non of vs that knoweth y way
Is of your way (qō she) ye shall not mys
Ye shal haue to gyde you day by day
Of my felawes, I can not better say
Suche one as shal tel you the wayes ful right
And Dyligence this gentyl woman hight

A woman of right famous gouernaunce
And wel cherished, I tel you in certayne
Her felauship shal do you great pleasaunce
Her porte is such, her maners trewe & playne
She with glad chere wol do her best payne
To bring you there, now farwel I haue done
Abyde sayd I, ye may not go so sone.

Why so quod she and I haue ferre to go
To yeue warnyng in many diuers place
To your felawes, and so to other mo
And wel ye wote I haue but litel space
Howe ver qō I ye must tel me this caas
If we shal any men vnto vs cal
Not one qō she may come amongst you al

Not one than sayd I, nay by benedicite
What haue I done, I pray you tel me that.
Nowe by my lyfe, I trowe but wel qō she)
But euer I can beleue there is somwhat
And for to sayen you trouthe more can I not
In questyons I may nothyng be to large
I meddle no further than my charge

Than thus quod I do me to vnderstande
What place is there this lady to belong
Forsothe qō she one sought al this lande
Fayrer is none, though it were for a kyng
Deuyced wel, and that in euery thyng
The roures bye ful pleasaunt shadowes caste
With shaues fresh, turnyng with euery wynde

The chambres and parlers of a sorte
Wt bay windowes, goodly as may be thought
As for daunsyng, and other wyse disporte
The galeryes right wel wrought
That wel I wote, if ye were thider brought
And take good hede therof in euery wyse
Ye wolde thinke a very paradyse

What hight & place qō I now for me that
Pleasaunt regarde qō she to tel you playne
Of verytrouth quod I and were ye what
It may right wel be called so certayne
But furthermore this wold I wit right fayn
What I shulde do as sone as I come there
And after whom I may best enquere

A gentyl woman, a porter of the yate
There shal ye fynde, her name is Countenaūce

If ye so hap ye come erly or late
Of her were good to haue some acquaintaūce
She can you tel howe ye shal you anaunce
And howe to come to her ladyes presence
To her wordes I rede ye geue credence

Nowe it is tyme I parte you fro
For in good faythe I haue great busynesse
I wote right wel (quod I) that it is so
And I thanke you of your great gentylnesse
Your comforte hath yeuen me hardynesse
That nowe I shal be bolde withouten fayle
To do after your aduyce and good counsayle

Thus parted she, and I lefte al alone
With that I sawe (as I beheelde aside)
A woman come a verye goodly one
And forth withal as I had her aspyde
Me thought anone it shoulde be the gyde
And of her name anone I dyd enquere
Ful womanly she yaue me this answere

I am (quod she) a symple creature
Sent from the courte, my name is Diligence
As sone as I might come I you ensure
I tarryed not after I had lycence
And nowe that I am come to your presence
Loke what seruyce I can do or may
Commaunde me, I can no further say

I thanked her, and prayed her to come nere
Because I would se how she was arayde
Her gowne was blew dressed in good maner
With her beurse, her worde also that sayde
(Tant que ie puis) and I was wel apayde
And than wyst I withouten any more
It was full tre we that I had herde before

Though we toke nowe before a lytel space
It were ful good (quod she) as I coude gesse
Howe farre (qō I) haue we vnto the place
A dayes iourney (quod she) but lytel lesse
Wherfore I rede that we outwarde dresse
For I suppose our felawshyp is past
And for nothynge I wold not we were ỹ last

Than departed we at the springyng of ỹ day
And forth we wente softe and easy pace
Tyl at the last we were on our iourney
So far outwarde, that we might se the place
Nowe let vs rest (quod I) a lytel space
And say we as deuoutly as we can
A Pater noster for sayntt Julyan

With all my herte I assent with good wyll
Moch better shal we spede, whā we haue
Than taried we, and sayd it euery dyl (done)
And whan the day was past farre after none
We sawe a place, and thyder came we sone
Whiche rounde aboute was closed vp a wal
Semynge to me ful lyke an hospital

There foūde I one had brought al myn aray
(I gentyl woman of myne acquayntaunce)
I haue meruayle (quod I) what maner way
Ye had knowlege of al this ordenaunce
Yes yes (quod she) I herde Perseueraunce
Howe she warned her felawes euerychone
And what aray ye shoulde haue vpon

Nowe for my loue (quod I) this I you praye
Sith ye haue take vpon you al the payne
That ye wolde helpe me on with myne araye
For wyt ye well I wolde be gone right fayne
All this prayer nedeth not certayne
(Quod she) agayne, come of a hye you sone
And ye shall se anone it shal be done

But this I doute me greatly, wote ye what
That my felawes be passed by and gone
I warne you (quod she) that are they nat
For here they shall assemble euerychone
Notwithstandynge I counsayle you anone
Make you redy, and tary you no more
It is no harme thoughe ye be there before

So than I dressed me in myne araye
And asked her whether it were wel or no
It is right wel (quod she) vnto my pay
Ye nede nat care to what place euer ye go
And whyles that she and I debated so
Came Diligence and sawe me al in blewe
Systet (qō she) right wel broke ye your newe

Discrecion purueyour.

Than wente we forth and met at auenture
A yonge woman, a right offycer semynge
What is your name (quod I) good creature
Discrecyon (quod she) without lesynge
And where (quod I) is your most abydynge
I haue (quod she) this office of purchace
Chefe purueyour that longeth to this place

Acquayntaunce herbyrger.

Fayre loue (quod I) in al your ordenaunce
What is her name that is the herbygere
For sothe (qō she) her name is Acquayntaunce
A woman of right gracyous maniere

Than

Che thus (qõ I) what straũgers haue ye here
But ke we (quod she) of high degre ne lowe
Ye be the first, as ferforth as I knowe

Countenaunce porter.

Thus with tales we came streight to ꝑ yate
This yonge woman departed was and gone
Came Diligence and knocked fast therat
Who is without (qõ Coũtenaunce) anone
Truely (quod I) fayre sister here is one
Which one (qõ she) a there withal she loughe
I Dilygence, ye knowe me wel ynoughe

Than opened she the gate, and in we go
With wordes fayre she sayde ful gentyly
Ye are welcome ywis, are ye no mo
Nat one (qõ she) saue this woman and I
Now than (qõ she) I pray you hertely
Take my chambre for a whyle to rest
Tyl your felawes come, I holde it best

I thanked her, and forth we go euerychone
Tyl her chambre without wordes mo
Came Diligence and toke her leaue anone
Where euer ye lyst quod I nowe may ye go
And I thanke you right hertely also
Of your labour, for which god do you mede
I can no more, but Jesu be your spede

Than Countenaunce asked me anone
Your felawshyp, where be they quod she
For sothe (qõ I) they be comynge euerychone
But where they are I knowe no certaynte
Without I may hem at this windowe se
Here wyl I stande awaytyng euer amonge
For wel I wote they wyl not be longe

Thus as I stode musyng ful busely
I thought to take good hede of her aray
Her gowne was blewe, thys wote I verely
Of good facyon, and furred wel with gray
Upon her sleue her worde this is no nay
Whiche sayd thus, as my penne can endite
I moy que ie voy write with letters white

Than forth withal she came streyght to me
Your wordes (qõ she) fayn wold I se I knew
For sothe (quod I) ye shal wel knowe and se
And for my worde I haue none, this is trew
It is ynough that my clothyng be blewe
As here before I had commaundement
And so to do, I am right wel content

Largesse stewarde.

But tel me this I pray you hertely
The stewarde here say me, what is her name
She hight Largesse I say you surely
A fayre lady and of right noble fame
When ye her se ye wyl reporte the same
And vnder her to byd you welcome al
There is Beleher marshal of the hal

Nowe al this while that ye here tary fayr
Your own maters ye may wel haue in mynde
But tel me this, haue ye brought any wyf
Ye ye quod I and els I were behynde
Where is there one tel me that I may fynde
To who ꝑ I may shewe my maters playne
Surely quod she vnto the chamberlayne

Remembraunce chamberlayne.

The chamberlayne quod I fayre mote we
Ye verely sayd she by myne aduise
Be nat afrayde, vnto her lowlynesse
It shal be done quod I as ye deuyse
But ye must knowe her name in any wyse
Trewly qõ she to shewe you in substaunce
Without fayning her name is Remembraunce

The secretarye she may not yet be forgete
For she dothe right muche in euery thynge
Wherfore I rede, when ye haue your mete
Your matere hole tel her without fayninge
Ye shal her fynde ful good and ful louynge
Tel me her name quod I of grace ere I se
By my good sothe quod she suffyseth it

That quod I for her is passyng good
For euery wyl and sedule she must be
How good qõ I come shal I her se
My felawes be comynge, ponder they se
Is it iape, or fay ye sothe quod she
In iape, nay nay, I say you for certayne
Se how they com togither cuaynt & cuayne

Ye fayr ful sothe quod she that is no nay
I se comyng a goodly company
They ben such folke qõ I dare I say
That lyst to loue, thynke it verely
And for my loue I pray you fayrefully
At any tyme, when they vpon me cal
That ye wol be good frende to hem al

Of my frendship qõ she they shal not mysse
And for their sake to put therto my payne
God yelde it you qõ I but take you this
Nowe shal we know who is ꝑ chamberlayne
That shal ye wel know by her worde certayne
What is her worde syster, I pray you say

(Plus ne purroy) thus wryteth she alway

Thus as we stode togyder she and I
Euen at the yate my felawes were echone
So met I hem (as me thought was goodly)
And bade hem welcome al by one and one
Than came forth Countenaunce anone
Ful hertely, fayre sisters al quod she)
Ye be right welcome into this countre

I counsayle you to take a lytel rest
In my chambre, if it be your plesaunce
Whan ye be there, me thynke it for the best
That I go in, and cal Perseueraunce
Bycause she is of your acquayntaunce
And she also wyl tel you euery thynge
Howe ye shal be ruled of your comynge

My felawes al and I, by one aduyse
Were wel agreed, to do lyke as she sayde
Thā we begā to dresse vs in our gyse (weyde
That folke shoulde saye we were nat vnpur-
And good wagers among vs there we layde
Which of vs was arrayed most goodlest
And of vs al whiche shulde be praysed best

The porter came and brought Perseueraūce
She welcomed vs in curteyse maniere
Chibe ye not longe (qō she) of your attēdaūce
I wyl go speke vnto the herbigere
That he pueuey for your lodging here
Than wyl I go vnto the chamberlayne
To speke for you, and come anone agayne

And whan she departed was and gone
We sayne folkes comyng without the wal
So grete people, that nombre coude we none
Ladyes they were, and gentelwomen al
Clothed in blewe eche one her worde with al
But for to knowe her worde or her deuise
They came so thicke, ỳ I ne might i no wise

With that anone came in Perseueraunce
And where I stode, she came streight to me
Ye, ben (qō she) of myn olde acquayntaunce
You to enquere the bolder woulde I be
What worde they bere eche after her degre
I you pray tel it me in secrete wyse
And I shal kepe it close on warrauntyse

We ben fyue ladyes (quod I) al in fere
And gentylwomen foure in company
When they begyn to open her matere
Than shal ye knowe her wordes by and by
But as for me I haue none verely
And so I tolde Countenaunce here before
Al myn aray is blewe, what nedeth more

Nowe than (quod she) I wol go agayne
That ye may haue knowelege, what ye shuld
In soth (qō I) if ye wolde take the payne do
Ye dyd right moche for vs, if ye dyd so
The rather spede, the soner may we go
Great coste alway there is in taryenge
And longe to sewe it is a wery thynge

Than parted she, and came agayne anone
Ye must (quod she) come to the chamberlayne
We be nowe redy (quod I euerychone
To folowe you, whan euer ye lyst certayne
We haue none eloquence to tel you playne
Beseechyng you we may be excused
Our true we meanyng, that it be not refused

Than went we forth after Perseueraunce
To se the pres it was a wonder cace
There for to passe it was great combraunce
The people stode so thycke in euery place
Nowe stande ye styl quod she a lytel space
And for your ease somwhat I shal assay
Yf I can make you any better way

And forth she gothe, amonge hem euerychone
Makyng a way, that we might through passe
More at our ease, and whan she had so done
She beckende vs to come, where as she was
So after her we folowed more and las
She brought vs streight vnto ỳ chāberlaine
There lefte she vs, and than she went agayne

We salued her as reason wolde it so
Ful humble besechyng her great goodnesse
In our matters that we had for to do
That she wolde be good lady and maystresse
Ye be welcome (quod she) in sothfastnesse
And se what I can do, you for to please
I am redy, that may be to your ease

We folowed her vnto the chamber dore
Sisters (quod she) come ye in after me
But wete ye wel, there was a payed flore
The goodlyest, that any wight might se
And furthermore about than loked we
On eche corner, and vpon euery wal
Whiche was made of Burel and Cristal

Wherin

wherin was grauen of stories many one
First howe Phillis, of womanly pyte
pyed pytcously for loue of Demophone
Next after was the story of Tysbe
howe she slewe her selfe vnder a tree
Yet sawe I more, howe in a ryght pytous
for Antony was slayne Cleopatras (caas

That other syde was hawes the chene
ful buttewly disceyued in her bayne
There was also Anuelida the quene
upon Arcite howe sore she dyd complayne
Al these stories were grauen there certayne
And many mo, than I rehersse you here
It were to longe to tel you al in fere

And bycause the walles shone so bright
With fyne bimple they were al ouer spred
To ỹ entent folke shulde not hurte her syght
And through it the stories myght be rad
Than further more I went, as I was lad
And there I sawe without any fayle
A chayre set, with ful rych aparayle

And fyue stages, it was set fro the grounde
Of Cassydony ful curously wrought
With foure poincelles of golde, & very rounde
Set wt saphirs, as good as coude be thought
That wot ye what, if it wer through sought
As I suppose, fro this counte to Inde
Another suche it were right farre to fynde

For wete ye wel, I was right nere that
So as I durst, beholdyng by and by
Aboue there was a riche clothe of estate
Wrought with the noble ful straungely
Her worde theron, and thus it sayd truely
I endure to tel you in wordes fewe
With great letters, the better I hem knewe

Thus as we stode, a doze ỹpened anone
A gentylwoman, femely of stature
Beryng a mace, came out her selfe alone
Sothely me thought a goodly creature
She spake nothynge to lowde, I you ensure
But hastely, but with goodly warmynge
Make rome (quod she) my lady is comynge

With that anone I sawe Perseueraunce
Howe she helde vp the taper in her hande
I sawe also right in goodly ordenaunce
This great lady within the taper stande
Comyng outwarde, I wol ye vnderstande
And after her a noble company
I coude not tel the nombre sykerly

Of their names I wolde nothyng enquere
Further than suche as we wolde serue vnto
Saue a lady, whiche was the chaunceliere
Attemperaunce sothely her name was so
For vs nedeth with her haue muche to do
In our matters, and alway more and more
And so forthe to tel you furthermore

Of this lady, her beaute to discryue
My cunnynge is to symple verely
For neuer yet the dayes of myne
So inly fayre I haue seue none truely
In her estate assured verely
There wanted nought, I dare wel assure
That longed to a goodly creature

And furthermore to speke of her arraye
I shal tel you the maner of her goune
Of clothe of golde, ful riche it is no nay
The colour blewe of right goodly fayrenesse
In taberde wise, the sleues hangyng aboute
And what purfyl there was, & in what route
So as I can I shal it you deuyse

After a sorte, the collet and the breste
Lyke as Ermyne is made in purfelynge
With great perles ful fyne and weste
They were couched al after one werkynge
With diamondes in stede of pounderynge
The sleues and purfel of alyke
They were made lyke in euery wyse

Aboute her necke a sorte of fayre rubyes
In ryche floures of ryght fyne enamayle
Upon her hed set in the fayrest wyse
A cercle of great balays of entayle
That in erneste to speke without fayle
For yonge and olde, and euery maner age
It was a worlde to loken on her vysage

Thus comyng forth to sytte in her estate
In her presence we kneled downe euerychone
Presentyng our billes, and wote ye what
Ful humbly she toke hem by one and one
When we had done, than came they al anone
And dyd the same ecke after her maniere
Kneling at ones, and syttynge al in fere

And whā this was don, she set in her place
The chamberlayne she dyd vnto her cal

And

And the goodly comyng vnto her a pace
Of her entent knowyng nothyng at al
Tolde backe the preate (qõ she) vp to yõr wal
Make large rome, but loke ye do not tary
And take these bylles to the secretary

The chamberlayne dyd her commaundement
And came agayne, as she was byd to do
The secretary there beyng present
The bylles were delyuered her also
Not onely ours, but many other mo
Than the lady with good aduyse agayne
Anone with al, called her chamberlayne

We wol (qõ she) the first thyng that ye do
The secretary ye do make come anone
With her bylles, and thus we wyl also
In our presence the rede hem euerychon
That we maye take good aduyse theron
Of the ladyes that ben of our counsayle
Loke this be done, wythouten any fayle

Whan the chamberlayne wyst of her entent
Anone she dyd the secretarye cal
Let your bylles (qõ she) be here present
My lady it wyl: Madame, qõ he) I shal
And in presence she wyl ye hem cal
With good wyl I am redy (quod she)
At her pleasure, whan she cõmaundeth me

And vpon that was made an ordynaunce
They that came first her bylles shulde be red
Ful gentelly than sayd Perseuerannce
Reason it wyl they were sonest spedde
Anone with al, vpon a taper spredde
The secretary layde hem downe echone
Our bylles first she redde one by one

The first lady bearyng in her deuyse
Sans quetamays, thus wrote she on her byl
Complayning sore, and in ful pyrous wyse
Of promesse made, with fayethful hert & wyl
And so broken ayenst al maner skyl
Without deserte, alwayes on her partye
In this mater, desiryng a remedye

Her next folowing, her word was (this wise
(Ung sanz chaungier) & thus she dyd cõplayne
Though she had be guerdoned for her seruice
Yet nothyng lyke as she that toke the payne
Wherfore she coude in no wyse her restrayne
But in this case se we beryl her presence
As reason wolde to haue recompence

So furthermore, to speke of other twayne
One of hem wrote after her fantasy
(Cinques puis leuer) & for to tel you playne
Her complaynt was ful pyrous verely
For as she sayd, there was great reason why
As I can remembre this matere
I shal you tel the processe al in fere

Her byl was made complayninge in her gyse
That of her ioye, her comforte and gladnesse
Was no surete, for in no maner wyse
She sayd therin no poynte of stablenesse
Nowe vl nowe wele, out of al sykernesse
Ful humbly desyring of her high grace
Soone to shewe her remedy in this case

Her felawe made her byl, and thus she sayd
In playning wise there as she loued best
Whether she were wrothe or wele apayde
She might not se whan she wolde faynest
And wrothe she was in very ernest
To tel her worde, as ferforth as I wote
(Entierment vostre) right thus she wrote

And vpon that she made a great request
With hert and wyl, & al that might be done
As vnto her that might redresse it best
For in her mynde there might she fynd it sone
The remedy of that whiche was her boone
Reherfyng that she had sayde before
Besechynge her it might be so no more

And in lyke wyse as they had done before
The gentylwomen of our company
Put her bylles, and for to tel you more
One of hem wrote (cest sanz dire) verely
And her matere hole to specify
Within her byl she put it in writynge
And what it sayd, ye shal haue knowynge

It sayd god wote, and that ful pytously
Lyke as she was disposed in her herte
No misfortune that she toke greuously
Alone to her was the ioy and smerte
Somtyme no thanke for al her good deserte
Other comforte she wanted none comyng
And so vsed, it greued her nothyng

Desyring her, and lowly besechinge
That she wolde for seke a better way
As she that had ben her dayes lyuyng
Stedfast and true we, and wyl be alway
Of her felawe, somwhat I shal you say

Whose

whose byl was red nexte forthe withal
And what it ment, rehersen you I shal

(En dieu est) she wrote in her deuyse
And thus she sayd without en fayle
Per trouthe might be take in no wyse
Like as she thought, wherfor she had mervaile
For trouth fortune was wont to take avayle
In every matere, but al that is ago
The more pyte that it is suffred so

Moch more there was, wherof she shulde cō
Put she thought it to great encōbrance (playn
So much to write, wherfore in certayn
In god and her she put al her affyaunce
As in her worde is made a remembraunce
Besechyng her, that she wolde in this cace
Shewe vnto her the favour of her grace

The thirde she wrote rehersyng her grevaūce
Ye, wote ye what, a pytous thing to here
For as me thought she felt great displesaūce
One myght ryght wel perceyve it by her chere
And no wonder, it sate her passyng nere
Yet lothe she was to put it in wryttinge
But nede wol have course in every thinge

(Soyes ensure) this was her worde certayn
And thus she wrote in a lytel space
There she loued, her labor was in vayne
For he was fer al in another place
Ful humbly desyrynge in that cace
Some good comforte her sorowe to appese
That she might lyve more at herres ease

The fourth surely me thought she liked wele
As in her porte, and in her behavynge
And bien monestre as ferre as I conde fele
That was her worde vnto her wel belovyng
Wherfore to her she prayed above al thyng
Ful hertely to say you in substaunce
That she wold sende her good countinuaūce

Ye haue rehersed me these bylles al
But nowe let se somwhat of your entent
It may so hap, paraventure ye shal
Nowe I pray you whyle I am here present
Ye shal have knowlege parde what I ment
But thus I say, in trouth I make no fable
The cace it selfe is inly lamentable

And wel I wote ye wol thynke the same
Like as I say, whan ye have here de my byl

Now good tel on, I hate you by saint Jame
For de a while, it is not yet my wyl
Yet must ye here by reason and by skyl
Suche ye have knowlege of ye was don before
And thus it is sayd without wordes more

Nothyng so lefe as deth to come to me
For final ende of my sorowes and payne
What shulde I more desyre as seme
And ye shal be al atezone ie for certayne
I wote ye wolde, and for to tel you playne
Without her helpe that hath al thurge in cure
I can nat thynke that it may longe endure

As for my trouth it hathe be proved wele
To say the sothe, I can say no more
Of ful longe tyme and suffred every dele
In patience, and kepe it al in store
Of her goodnesse, besechyng her therfore
That I might have my thanke in dede wele
As my beleefe serveth of wisdome

Whan these billes were red every chone
The ladyes toke a good advysement
And bem to answere by one and one
She thought it was to muche in their present
Wherfore they gave hem counsayle every
To her to retorne to come bothe and se
To geve hem her answere in generale

What dyd she than but sodenly arose
She spake her selfe, and sayd in this manere
We have wel sene your bylles or nowe
And some of hem prous for to here
We wol therfore ye knowe al this entere
Within these tryne, our court of parlement
Here shal be holde in our palays prudent

And in al this, wherin you fynde your grevaūce
There shal ye fynde an open remedy
In such wyse as ye shal be relevyd
Of al that ye rehersed here traveyle
As for the date ye shal knowe verely
That ye may have a space in your comyng
For diligence that it rel you by warnyng

We thanked her in our most humble wyse
Our felawshyp echo one by one affirme
Submyttynge vs lowly vnto her servyse
For as we thought, we had our travayle spēt
In suche wyse as we helde vs content
Than che of vs toke other by the sleve
And forth withal, as we shulde take our leve

Al sodarnly the water sprange anone
In my visage, and therwithal I woke
Where am I now thought I, al this is gone
Al mased, and vp I gan to loke
With that anon I went and made this boke
Thus simply rehersyng the substaunce
Because it shulde not be out of remembraunce

Nowe verely your dreame is passyng good
And worthy to be had in remembraunce
For though I stand here as longe as I stode
It shulde to me be none encombraunce
I toke therin so mly great plesaunce
But tel me nowe what ye the boke do cal
For I muste write: With right good wyl ye shal

As for this boke, to say you very right
Of the name to tel you in certaynte.
Assemble de dames, thus it hight
Nowe thinke ye, that name is good paide
Nowe go farewel, for they cal after me
My felawes al, and I must after sone
Rede wel my dreme, for nowe my tale is done

Finis.

The conclusyons of the Astrolabye.

LYtel Lowys my sonne, I perceyue well by certayne euydences thyne abylyte to lerne sevences, touchynge nombres and proporcions: and also wel consydre I thy bee sye prayer in especyal to lerne the treatyse of the Astrolabye. Therfore as muche as a Philosopher sayethe, he wrapeth hym in hys frende, that condyscendeth to the ryghtful prayers of hys frende: Therfore I haue gyuen thee a sufficyent Astrolabye for oure orizonte, compowned after the latytude of Oxenforde: Upon the whiche by medycacyon of this lytel treatyse, I purpose to teache thee a certayne nombre of conclusyons, pertaynynge to thys same instrument. I saye a certayne of conclusions for thre causes, the first cause is this. Truste wel that al the conclusyons that haue be founden, or els possiblye myght be founde in so noble an instrument as is the Astrolabye, ben vnknowe perfytely to anye mortal man in this regyon, as I suppose. Another cause is this, forthely in many cartes of the Astrolaby that I haue vsene, there ben some conclusions, that wolnot in al thinges performe her behestes: and some of hem be to harde to thy tender age of ten yere to conceyue. This treatyse deuyded in fyue parts wil I shewe the wonder lyghte rules & naked wordes in englysche, for latyn ne canst thou nat yet but smale, my lytel sonne. But neuertheless sufficeth to the these trewe conclusyons in englysche, as wel as sufficeth to this noble clerkes grekes these same conclusions in greke, & to y Arabiens in arabike, And to Jewes in Ebrayke, & to y latyn folke in latyn: whiche latyn folke had hem firste out of other dyuers languages, & wrote hem in her owne tonge, that is to sayne in latyne.

And god wote that in al these languages and in manye mo, haue these conclusyons ben sufficyentlye lerned and taught, and yet by dyuers rules, right as dyuers pathes leaden dyuers folke the ryght waye to Rome.

Nowe wot I pray mekelye euery person discrete that redeth or herith this lytel treatyse, to haue my rude entendyng excused, and my superfluite of wordes, for two causes. The first cause is, for that curyous endytyng and harde sentences is ful heuy at ones, for suche a childe to lerne. And the seconde cause is this, that

that forthy me semeth better to writen vnto a childe twyse a good sentence, than he forgete it ones. And Lowys if it so be that I shewe the many lyth Englisshe, as trewe conclusyons, touching this mater, and not onely as trewe, but as many and subtyl conclusyons as bene shewed in latyn in any comune treatise of the Astrolabye, conne me the more thanke, and praye god saue the kynge, that is lorde of this langage, and al that him fayth beareth, and obeyeth euerich in his degre, the more and the lasse. But consydre the well, that I ne clayme not to haue founden this werke of my labour or of myne engyn, I nam but a scilde compylatour of the laboure of olde Astrologiens, and haue it translated in myn englysshe only for thy doctryne: and wyth thys swerd shal I sleue enuy.

¶ The first partye.

The first partye of thys treatise shal teche the figures, and membres of thyn astrolaby, bicause that thou shalte haue the greater knowynge of thyne owne instrument.

¶ The seconde partye.

The seconde partye shal teche the to werken the very practyke of the forsayd conclusions as forthe and al so narowe as may be shewed in so smale an instrumente portatyfe, aboute. For wel wote euery astrologyen, that smallest fractions ne wol not be shewed in so small an instrumente, as in subtyll tables calculed for a cause.

¶ The thirde partye.

The thirde partye shal contayne dyuers tables of longitudes and latytudes of sterres, fixe in the Astrolabye. And tables of the declynacions of the sonne, and tables of the longitude of cyties and townes. And tables as well for the gouernacion of the clocke, as for to fynde the altytude meridyan, and many an other notable conclusyon after the kalenders of the reuerent clerkes frere John Somn, and frere N. Lenne.

¶ The fourth partye.

The fourth partye shal be a theorike to declare the meaning of the celestyal bodyes, with the causes, the which the fourth partie in special shal shewe in a table of the very meuinge of the moone from one to one euery daye and euery signe, after thyn almanake. Upon the which table there folowyth a canon, sufficient to teache as wel in maner of worknynge in the same conclusions, as to knowe in our orizonte, with which degre of zodiac the moone aryseth in any latytude, and the arysyng in any planette after hys latytude fro the ecliptyke lyne.

¶ The fyfte partye.

The fyfthe partie that ben an introductoire after the natures of our doctrines, in which thou mayst lerne a great parte of the generall rules of theorike in astrologie. The fyfthe partie thou shalt fynde tables of longitudes of houses, after the latytude of cyties forde, and tables of dignitees of planettes, and other noteful thynges, if god lyste and our mother the mayden, more than I behete.

¶ The ryngc.

Thy Astrolabye hath a ryngc to putten in thy thombe on thy ryght honde, to take the heyght of thynges. And take kepe how hence forwarde I wol clepe the heyght of any thyng, that is take by the rule, but only withouten mo wordes.

¶ The rutte.

This ryngc renneth in a maner of a rutte, fastened to the moder of thyn Astrolabye, to bere a space that it diffyne after the instrument to hangen after ms ryght. The moder of thyn Astrolabye is the thikke bynde that is the brinke that is the thikkest syde, that bereth and halt al the remenaunt within that be thynne, to receyue the sundry clymates, and also for the cause that is shapen in maner of a net, or els like vnto the shape of a lappe.

¶ The moder.

The moder of thyn Astrolabye is the thikkest place perced with a large hole that goeth in her wombe the thynne plates entayned of diuers clymates, the which shapen in maner of a net or of a webbe of a lappe.

¶ Of the foure lynes.

This moder is deuyded on the backe syde with a lyne, that cometh dyrectly ryght ouer tryng down to the nethereste bordure the which lyne, fro the forsayd tryng vnto the centre of the large hole amidde, is cleped south lyne, or els the lyne meridional. And the remenaunt of this lyne down to the bordure is cleped the nor the lyne, or al the lyne of the midnight.

¶ Of the lynes est, west, north, & south.

Ouerthwarte this forsayd long lyne, there crosseth him another lyne of the same length, fro est to west, of the which lyne, from a lyne est crosse in the bordure vnto the centure of the

large hoole, is cleped ỳ eest lyne, or els ỳ lyne oriental: and the remenaunte of the lyne, fro the forsayd oriental vnto the bordure, is yclepped the west lyne, or the lyne occidentall. Nowe hastu here the foure quarters of thyne Astrolabye deuyded after the four principal plages or quarters of the firmament.

¶ Which is the right syde, and whiche is the lyfte.

The eest syde of the Astrolabye is cleped the ryght syde, and the west syde is cleped the lyfte syde. Forget not this lytell Lowys. Put the tynge of thyne Astrolabye vpon the thombe of thy ryghte hande, & than wol hys ryght syde be towarde thy lyft syde, and his lyfte syde wol be towarde thy ryghte syde. Take thys rule generall as well on the backe as on the wombe syde. Vpon the ende of this eest lyne as I first sayd is ymarked a lytel crosse, where as euermore generallye is considred the entryng of the eest degre, in the which the sonne aryseth.

¶ The degrees fro the eest lyne to the Southe.

From the lytel crosse vp to the ende of the merydyonal lyne vnder the tynge thalte thou fynde ỳ bordure, deuyded w. lxxxx. degrees, & by that same proporcion is euerye quarter of thyne Astrolabye deuyded, ouer ỳ which degrees there ben nombres of augrim, that deuyden thylke same degrees fro .v. to .v. as sheweth by longe strikes betwene of the which by .iij. strikes ỹ space betwen cõteyneth a myle way, & euery degree of thilke bordure conteyneth four mynutes, that is to say, four mynutes of an houre.

¶ Of the twelue sygnes, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, and the other.

Vnder the compas of thylke degrees ben written the names of the twelue signes, as Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornius, Aquarius, & Pisces. And the nõbres of ỳ degrees of the sygnes ben written in augrim aboue, and wyth longe dyuysions from fyue to fyue, deuideth from the tyme that the signe entreth vnto the laste ende. But vnderstande well, that these degrees of sygnes bene euerych of hem confydred of lx. mynutes, and euery mynute of lx. secondes, and so forthinto smale fractions infinite, as saith Alcabucius. And therfore knowe wel that a degre of the bordure cõteyneth .iiij. mynutes, and a degre of a signe contayneth .lx. mynutes, and haue this in mynde.

¶ The cercle of the dayes.

Nexte this foloweth the cercle of the dayes, ỳ ben fygured in maner of the degrees, that cõteyneth in nombre .CCClxv. deuyded also with longe strikes from .v. to .v. and the nombres of augrim writtẽ vnder the cercle.

¶ The cercle of the .xii. monthes

Nexte the cercle of dayes foloweth ỳ cercle of the .xii. names of the monthes, that is to say, Januarius, Februarius, Marcius, Apil, Maius, Junius, Julius, August, Septẽber, October, Nouẽber, Decẽber. The names of these monthes taken her names, some for properties and some by statutes of Emperours, and some by other lordes of Rome. Eke of these monthes, as lyked to Julius Cesar and Cesar Augustus, some were ycompowned of dyuers nombres of dayes, as July & August. Than hathe Januarius xxxi dayes, Februarius .xxviii. Marcius .xxxi. Apill .xxx. May, xxxi. Junius .xxx. August .xxxi. September. xxx. October .xxxi. Nouember .xxx. December .xxxi. Natheless all thoughe that Julius Cesar tooke two dayes oute of Feuerye and put hem in hys monthe of July, and Augustus Cesar cleped the moneth of August after his name, & ordayned it of xxxi. dayes, yet trust well that the sonne dwelleth therfore neuer the more ne the lasse in one sygne than in another.

¶ The names of the holy dayes.

Than foloweth the names of ỳ holy dayes in the kalender, and next hem the letters, A, B, C, on which they fallen.

¶ The scale of the Astrolabye.

Next the forsayd cercle of the A, B, C, vnder the crosse lyne is marked the scale, in maner of two squyres, or els in maner of ledders that stretcheth by his .xxii. poyntes, and hys deuysions of full manye a subtell conclusyon of this forsayd scale: For the crosse lyne vnto the bery angle, is cleped Umbra recta, or els umbra extensa, & the neyther party umbra versa.

¶ The rule.

Than

Than haste thou a brode rule that hath on euery ende a square plate, parted wt certayne holes, some more & some lesse, to receyuen the beames of the sonne by dare, and eke by medyacio of thyn eye, to know the altytud of the sterres by nyght.

¶ The pyn, whiche is ymagyned to be pole artyke and the horse.

Than is there a large pyn in maner of an ewyre, that goth throwe the hole that halte the tables of the clymathes in the teeth, in the wombe of the moder, throwe which pynne there goth a lytell wedge, the which is cleped the horse, that strayneth all these partes togyther. This forsayd greate pynne in maner of an ewyre, is ymagened to be the pole artyke in thyne Astrolabye.

¶ For lynes on the wombe syde.

The wombe syde of thyn Astrolaby is also deuyded with a longe crosse in four quarters from Est to West, from Southe to Northe, from ryst syde to lyfte syde, as is the backside

¶ The degrees of the wombe syde.

The bordet of the which wombe syde is deuyded fro the poynte of the Est lyne vnto the poynte of the southe lyne vnder the tynge in lxxx. degrees, and by the same proporcion is euery quarter deuyded as is the backsyde, ꝑ amounteth .CCC.lx. degrees. And vnderstande well that the degrees of this bordet be answeryng and consentyng to the degrees of equinoctial that is deuyded in the same nombre, as euery other cercle is in the hye heuen. This bordet is deuyded also wyth xxiii. letters, and a smale crosse aboue the southe lyne, that shewth the xxiii. houres equales of the clocke. And I haue sayde, v of these degrees maken a myle way, and iii. myle way maken an houre, and euery degre of this bordet conteyneth .iiii. myuutes, and euery myuute .xl. secondes. Nowe haue I tolde the ryght and for the more declaracion.

¶ Of the principall cercles

The plate vnder the reete is dyscryued with thre cercles of whiche the left is cleped the cercle of Cancer, bycause ꝑ the heed of Cancer turneth euermore concentrike vpon the same cercle. In this halfe of Cancer is the greteste declynacion northward of the sonne, and therfore is he cleped Solsticium of somer, which declinacion after ꝑ Ptholome, is. xxiii. degrees and .l. myuutes, as well in Cancer as in Capricorne. This lygne of Cancer is cleped the tropike of sómer of tropos that is to sayne ayenwarde. The myddel cercle in wydnes of this iii. is cleped the cercle equinoctial, vpon whiche turneth euermore the heedes of Aries and Libra. And vnderstande well, that euermore this cercle equinoctial turneth vnder fro verey Est to verey West as I haue shewed in the sphere solid. This same cercle is cleped also the wayes of the day, for when the sonne is in the hedde of Aries and Libra, than ben dayes and nyghtes lyke of lengthe in all the world, wherfore ben these two lygnes called equinoctis. And all that meueth vnder these heedes of Aries and Libra, is called meuyng warde, and al that meueth vnder out these heedes, this meuyng is cleped southwarde as fro the equinoctiall, take kepe of the wordes Northe & Southe, and forget not. And this cercle equinoctiall hene considred the xxiii. houres of the clocke. For euermore ech space of xv. degrees of the equinoctiall maketh an houre equale of the clocke. This equinoctiall is cleped the myd way of the first meuyng of the heuens of the sonne. And note that the first meuyng is cleped meuyng of the firste mouable of the eight sphere, which meuyng is euermore fro Est to West, & agayne in to Est. And the gyrdel of the first meuyng, that is cleped the first meuable, that is to sayne, ꝑ the sphere of lyke partes euen distant fro the poles of the worlde. The nyddel of these thre cercles equipal is cleped the cercle of Capricorne, and meueth euermore concentrike vpon the same cercle. In the hede of this forsayd Capricorne is the greatest declynacyon southward of the sonne. And therfore is it cleped ye tropike of wynter. This name of Capricorne is cleped the tropike of wynter for the sonne is the sonne to come agayne to vs warde.

¶ Of the almycanteras the lygne, and what is thereof sayde.

Vpon this forsayde plate ben compased certayne cercles, that ben cleped almycanteras: of which some of hem ben cercles parfyte, and some semen imparfyte.

The cercle that goeth ryght ouer the hedde, the narowest cercle is cleped the lygne. And the next thereof cercle, that deuydeth the two emysperies that is the parte of the heuen aboue ye erthe, and the parte vnderthe. These almycanteras

ben compowned by two and two, all be it so that on dyuers astrolabies some almycanteras ben deuyded by one, & some by two, and some by thre, after the quantyte of the Astrolabye. Thys forsayde signet is ymagyned to be the very poynt ouer the crown of thy heed, and also this signet is the very pole of the orizonte in euery region.

¶ What ben thyne azimutes.

Frō this signet as it semeth there comen croked strykes lyke to the clawes of a loppe, or els lyke to the werke of a womans calle, in keruyng ouerthwarte the almycanteras, and these same strykes or dyuysions ben cleped Azimutes, and they deuyden the orizontes on thyne Astrolabye in xxiiii. dyuysions. And these azimutes serue to know the costes of ye fyrmament, and to other cōclusyons, as for to know the signet of the sonne & of euery sterre.

¶ Of the xii. houres of the planettes.

NExte these azymutes, vnder the cercle of Cancer, ben the xii. dyuysyons enbowe, moche lyke to the shap of the azymutes that shewe the spaces of houres of planettes.

¶ Thy tecte or els thy zodiake.

THe tecte of thyn Astrolabye which is thy zodiake shapen in maner of a mytre or of a loppe webbe, after the olde diuersyon, which thou maist enbowe vp & down as thy selfe lyketh, conteineth certayne nombre of sterres fyxe, with her longytudes & latitudes determinate, if so be that the maker haue not erred. The names of the sterres ben written in the margyn of thy tecte there they sytte, of the whiche sterres the smale poynt is cleped ye centure. And vnderstonde, ye al the sterres fyxynge within the zodiake of thyn astrolabye, ben cleped sterres of ye north, for they aryse by the northe est lyne, and all the remenaunt fyxes out of the zodiake, bene yeleped sterres of the southe, but I saye not that they aryse al by the south est lyne, witnesse of Aldeberan and also Algomyza. Generally vnderstonde this rule, that thilke sterres that ben cleped sterres of the northe aryse rather than the degree of her longytude, and all the sterres of the southe, aryse after the degree of her longytude, that is to sayne, sterres in thyne astrolabye. The measure of longytude of sterres taken in the lyne ecliptyke of heuen, vnder the whyche lyne whan that the sonne and the moone ben lyne right, els in the superfycie of thys lyne, than is the eclyps of the sonne or of the moone, as I shal declare & eke the cause why: but sothly ye ecliptyke lyne of thy zodiake is the vttereste bordure of the zodiake ther thy degrees ben marked. The zodyake of thy astrolabye is shapen as a compace, whyche that conteyneth a large brede, as after the quantyte of thy astrolabye, in ensample that the zodyake of heuen is ymagyned to be a superfycies, conteynynge the latytude of xii. signes, where as all the remenaunt of cercles in heauen ben ymagyned very lynes without any latytude amyddes the celestyall zodyake is imagyned a lyne, whych that is cleped the ecliptyke lyne, vnder ye whych lyne is euermore the waye of the sun. Thus be there .vi. degrees of ye zodiake of that one syde of the lyne, and .vi. degrees on that other. The zodiake is deuyded in xii. principal deuysyons, that departen the xii. signes, and for ye straytnesse of thyn astrolabye, than is euery smale deuysyon in a signe sparred by two degrees and two, I meane degrees conteynynge .ii. mynutes, and this forsayde heuenlyche zodiake is cleped the cercle of the signes, or the cercle of beestes, for zodiake in langage of grecke sowneth beestes in latyn rouge, and in the zodiak ben the xii. signes that haue names of beestes, by cause whan the sonne entreth many of the signes, he taketh the propertie of suche beestes, or els for that the sterres ye ben there be fyxed ben supposed in signes of beestes or shape lyke beestes, or els whan the planettes ben vnder the signes they semeblen by her influences, operations, and effectes lyke to operacions of beestes. And be ye vnderstande also, that whan an hoote planette entreth into an hoote signe, than encreseth his hetenesse, and if a planet be colde, than amenuiseth his coldenesse, because of the hoote signe. And by this conclusyon mayste thou take ensample in all signes, be they moyste or drye, moyable or fyxe, reckenynge the quantyte of the planettes as I first tolde the. And euery one of these xii. signes hath respecte to a certayne parcel of the body of a man, and hath it in gouernaunce: as Aries hath thyn heed, & Taurus thy nekke and thy throte, Gemini thyne armholes and thyn armes, and so forthe, as shall be shewed more plainly in the fifth partie of this tretyse. The zodiake the whiche is partie of the eyghte sphere, ouerthwerteth the equinoctial, and he ouerthwerteth hym agayne in euen parties, and that

that one halfe declyneth southwarde, and that other northwarde, as playnlye declareth the matryse of the sphere.

¶ The label.

Than hast thou a label that is shapen lyke a rule, saue that it is streight and hath no plates on eyther ende, but with the smale poynte of the forsayd label shalt thou calcule the equations in the bordure of thyn astrolabye as by thyne almury.

¶ The almury, the bentycle of Capricorne, or els the calculere.

Thyne almury is cleped the bentycle of Capricorne, or els ꝑ calculere, thys same almury set ryght in the heed of Capricorne, it serueth of many a necessary conclusion in equacion of iorneys, as shal be shewed.

¶ Here begynneth the conclusions of thyne Astrolabye to fynde the degre in the whiche the sonne is day by day, after his course aboute.

WHen and knowe whiche is the daye of the moneth, I lay my rule upon the same daye, and than I set the verye poynte of my rule verye euen upon the bordure ꝑ the degree of ꝑ sonne, Exemple as thus. The yere of oure Lorde M.CCC.lxxxvi. the xv. day of March at my day, I wolde knowe ꝑ degre of ꝑ sonne; I sought in ꝑ backsyde of myne Astrolabye, & founde the circle of the dayes the which I knewe by the names of the monthes written under the same circle thorowe the which I my rule ouer the forsayd day, & touche the poynte of my rule in the bordure upon the xvii. degree of Aries, a litell within, degrees and thus knewe I this conclusion. Another day I wolde knowe the degree of my sonne, and this was at my day in the [illegible] day of December, I founde the daye of the moneth in maner as I sayde the laste, I my rule upon the forsayd daye, and founde the poynte of my rule upon the xvii. degree of Capricorne, a litell within ꝑ degre, and than had I of this conclusyon the verye experience.

¶ To knowe the altitude of the sonne eyther of celestyal bodyes.

Put the ryng of thyne Astrolabye upon thy ryghte thombe, and reame thy lyfte syde agayne the lyghte of the sonne, and remeue thy rule by and downe tyll the streame of the sonne shyne thorowe both the holes of the rule: Loke than how many degrees this rule is arysed fro the lyfte Crosse upon the eest lyne, and take there the altytude of thy sonne: and in this same wyse mayste thou knowe by nyght the altytude of ꝑ moone, or of ꝑ bryght sterres. This chapytre is so generall euen in one that there needeth no more declaracyō, but forget it not

¶ To knowe the degree of the sonne and of thy ꝑdiake, by the dayes in the backsyde of thyne astrolabye.

THan if thou wylte wete the reckenynge to knowe whiche is the daye in the calender of the moneth that thou astrolabyest thyne Astrolabye, that is to saye the altytude that ꝑpon the daye in the calender of thyne Astrolabye, and he shall shewe the ryght degree of the sonne.

¶ To knowe euery tyme of the daye by the sonne, and euery tyme of the nyght by the sterres fyxe, and ꝑ to knowe by nyght of the daye the degree of the tryne ꝑ aforesayd in the firmament, whiche is called commonly almykantras.

WHen the altytude of the sonne whan the ryght as I sayde and set the degree of the sonne in ca that it be before mydde of the daye, I amoge my almykanteras on the lyfte syde of thyne astrolabye and if it be after the mydde of the daye, set the degre of the sonne upon the ryght syde. Take this manere of reckenynge for a generall rule ouer all, and whan thou hast sette the degree of the sonne vpon as many almykanteras of height as were the sonne, taken by the rule, laye ouer the label upon the degree of the sonne, and than loke the poynte of the label fyxed in the bordure upon the verye syde of the daye. Exemple of this. The yeare of oure Lorde M.CCC.lxxxvi. the xv. daye of March, I wolde knowe the syde of the day, I take the altytude at my sonne, and founde that it was xx degrees, and ꝑ myn. of the eyght of ꝑ bordure in the backsyde, the turned I myn astrolabye, because it was before myddaye I turned my reete, and set the

arche of the day: the remnaũt of the bordure vnder the orizonte, is the arche of the nyght. Thus mayst thou reken both the arches of euery portion where that thou likest, and by this maner of werkyng mayst thou se how longe that any sterre fyxe dwelleth aboue the erthe, fro the tyme that he ryseth tyl he go to rest. But the daye naturell, that is to sayne. 24. houres, is the reuolucyon of the equinoctial, with as moche parte of the zodyake, as the sonne of hys proper mouynge passeth in the meane whyle.

¶ To turne the houres inequalles, and the houres equalles.

To knowe the nombre of the degrees in the houres inequales, & departe hem by .15. and take there thyn houres equales.

To knowe the quantite of the day vulgare, that is to say, fro sprynge of the day vnto the very nyght.

Knowe thy quantyte of thyne ecepsclys, as I haue it taught in the chapter before, and adde hem to the arche of the day artyficiall, and take there thy space of al the hole day vulgare vnto the very nyght. In the same maner mayste thou werke to knowe the vulgare nyght.

¶ To knowe the houres inequales by daye.

Vnderstande wel that these houres inequales been cleped houres of ỳ planetes: And vnderstonde well ỳ somtyme ben the longer by daye thã they be by night, and somtyme contrarye. But vnderstãdthou wel, ỳ euermore generally ỳ houres inequale of ỳ daye, & houres inequale of the night, conteyneth 360. degrees of the bordure, ỳ which bordure is euermore answeryng to the degrees of the equinoctial, wherfore departe the arche of the daye artyficial in .12. and take there the quantyte of the houre inequale by day, and if thou abate the quantite of the houre inequale by day out of 360. degrees, than shall the remnaunt that leaueth performe the houre inequale by nyght

¶ To knowe the quantite of houres equales.

The quantytes of houres equales, that is to sayne the houres of the clocke, ben departed by .15. degrees alredy in the bordure of thy Astrolabye, as wel by nyghtas by daye generally for euermore. What nedeth any more declaracyon: wherfore whan the lyste to knowe howe many houres of the clocke ben passed, or any parte of any of these houres ben to comẽ fro suche a tyme to suche a tyme, by day or by nyght, knowe the degre of thy sonne, and laye thy label on it: thanne turne thy rete aboute iointly with thy label, and with the poynt of it reken in the bordre fro the sonne aryuing in to ỳ same place there thou desyrest by day as by nyght. This conclusyon wol I declare in the fourthe partye of the laste chapiter of thys treatyse, so openly that there shal lacke no worde that nedeth declaracyon.

¶ Special declaracyon of the houres of the planettes.

Vnderstãde wel that euermore fro the aryuing of ỳ sonne til it go to rest ỳ nadir of the sonne shal shewe the houre of ỳ planet, and fro that tyme forwarde al the nyght tyll the sonne aryse, than shal the very degre of the sonne shewe the houre of the planet. Ensample as thus. The .13 day of Marche fel vpon a saturday parauenture, and at the aryssing of the sonne I founde the second degre of Aries sittynge vpon myn est orizonte, al be it was but lytel. Than founde I the seconde degree of Libra nadyre of my sonne, descendynge on my west orizonte, vpon whiche west orizont euery daye generally at the sonne arisyng entreth the houre of any planet, vnder ỳ forsaid weste orizont, after the which planet the day beareth his name, & endeth in the nexte strike of the planet, vnder the forsayd west orizont: and euer as the sonne clymbeth vpper and vpper, so goth his nadyre downer & downer, & chaunge fro suche strikes ỳ hours of planettes by order as they ystonden in heuen. The fyrste houre inequale of euery saturday is Saturn, and the second to Iupiter, ỳ thirde to Mars the fourth to ỳ Sonne, the fyfth to Venus, ỳ sixt to Mercurius, ỳ seuenth to the Moone, and than ayen ỳ eight to Saturne, the nineth to Iupiter, the tenth to Mars, the eleuenth to the

the sonne, the twelfth to Venus. And nowe is my sone gon to rest as for that saterday, tha shewth the very degre of the sone the houre of Mercury, entryng vnder my weste orizont at euen. And nexte hym succedeth the moone, and so forth by order planette after planet, in houre after houre al the nyght longe tyll the sonne aryse. Nowe ryseth the sonne the sonday by the morowe, & the nadyr of the sonne vpon the weste orizont, shewth me ꝑ entryng of the houre of the forsayd sonne. And in this maner succedeth planet vnder planet fro Saturne vnto the moone, and fro the moone vp agayne to Saturne houre after houre generally: and thus knowe I this conclusyon.

¶ To knowe with which degree of the zodyake any sterre fyxe in thyn astrolabye aryseth vpon the Est orizont, although the orizonte be in an other signe.

Sette the centure of the sterre vpon the est orizonte, and loke what degree of any sygne that ryseth vpon the same orizonte at the same tyme: And vnderstande well that with the same degree aryseth the same sterre. And this meruaylous aryssinge with a strange degree in another signe, is ꝑcause that the latytude of the sterre fyxe is either Northe or Southe fro the equinoctyal. But sothly the latytudes of planettes be comenly reckened fro the eclipteyke, ꝑcause that none ethem declyneth but few degrees out fro the bredth of the zodyake. And take good kepe of this chapiter of aryssing of celestyal bodyes, for there trusteth wel, that neyther moone nei ther sterre in our ambolyke orizonte, that ariseth with ꝑ same degre of his longitude, saue in one case, and that is whan they haue no longitude fro the eclypteyke lyne. But neuer the lesse somtyme is euerych of these planettes vnder the same lyne.

To knowe the declynacion of any degre in the zodiake, fro the equinoctial cercle.

Sette the degree of anye sygne vpon the lyne meridyonal, and reckene this alcytude in the almycanteras fro the Est orizonte vp to the same degree sette in the zodiake lyne, and sette there a pryeke: Turne vp than thy rete and set the heed of Aries or Libra in the same meridional lyne, and set ther another pricke. And whan that this is doone, cõsyder the altytudes of hem bothe: for sothly the difference of thilke altitude is the declynacyon of thilke degree fro the equinoctial. And yf it so be ꝑ thy the degree be northwarde fro the equinoctial, than is his declinacõ north, and if it be southwarde, than it is southe.

To knowe for what latytude in any regyon the almycanteras in my tables ben compounded.

When how many degrees of almycanteras in the meridionall line, be from the cercle equinoctial vnto the signe ꝑ cercle from the pole artike vnto the horizont ꝑpendicular: for so great a latytude or so lyttle a latytude, is the table compounded.

To knowe the latytude of the sonne in the myddes of the day, after the reckened the altytude meridian.

Set the degre of the sonne vpon the meridional, and reckene how many degrees of almycanteras ben bytwene the orizont, and the degree of the sonne, and there thyn altitude meridian. Forsothe the highest degree of ꝑ sonne at his ryssinge is the highest lyne that any sterre fyxe hath in a nyght, this is to sayne, that whan it is passed the lyne meridyonal it goeth it to defende, and so downe lower.

¶ To knowe the degre of the sonne or of any sterre for a maner conclusyon.

Sette the bulete with the rule the heyght of the sonne in myddes of the day, tourne than thyn Astrolabye, and with a pryeke of yuke marke the nombre of ꝑ same altytude in the lyne meridional. Tourne than the rete aboute tyl thou fynde a degre of the zodyake accordyng with the pricke, this is sayd, seyeng on the pryeke, and in forthinketh shalt fynde but two degrees in al the zodiake of that condicion. And yet thilke two degrees ben in dyuers signes. Thã mayst thou lightly by the season of the yere knowe the signe in which is the sonne.

To knowe whiche day is lyke to other in length throughout the yere.

Loke

Loke whiche degrees ben ylyke from the heedys of Cancer and Capricorne, and loke whan the sonne is in anye of thilke degrees, than ben the dayes lyke of length, ý is to sayn, that as longe is ý day in that moneth, as was suche a daye in suche a moneth, there varyeth but lyttel. Also if thou take two dayes naturelles in the yere ylike farre from eyther poinctes of the equinoctial in the oppositye partes, thā as longe is the day artificial on that one day as on that other, and eke the contrarye.

¶ This chapiter is a maner declaracyon to conclusyons that followeth.

Vnderstande well, that the zodyake is departed into halfe cercles, fro me the heed of Capricorne vnto ý heed of Cancer, eyenwarde from the heed of Cancer vnto the heed of Capricorne. The heed of Capricorn is the lowest poynt, where as the sonne goth in wynter, and the heed of Cancer is the highest poynt, in whiche the sonne gothe in Somer. And therfore understande wel, that any two degrees that ben ylyke far from any of these two heedes, must wel that thilke two degrees ben lyke declinacion, be it Southwarde or Northwarde, and the dayes of hem ben lyke of lengthe, and the nyghtes also. And lyke altitudes ylike, ý is altitudes ylike at mydday forsothe.

To knowe the verye degree of any maner starre straunge after his latytude, though he be interminate in thyn astrolabye, forthy to the fourth thus he shal be knowen.

Take the altytude of thy starre whanne he is on ý Est syde of ý lyne meridional as nyghe as ý maist gesse, and take ý ascendēt anone tyghte by some maner clar fixe whiche thou knowest and forgete not the altytude of the first starre ne thyn ascendēt. And whā that this is done, aspye diligently whanne this same first starre passeth any thyng to the southwestwarde, and catche hym anone tight in the same nombre of the altitude on ý west syde of this lyne meridional, as he was caught on the Est syde, and take a newe ascendent anone tyght by some maner fixe, the which that thou knowest, and forgete not this seconde ascendēt. And whan this is done, reken than howe many degrees ben bytwyxt the first ascendent and the seconde ascendēt, and reken wel the myddel degre bytwyxt bothe ascendentes, and set thilke myddel degree upon thyn Est orizonte, and than loke what degre sit upon the line meridional and take there the very degre of the ecliptike, in which the starre standeth for the tyme. For in the ecliptyke is the longytude of a celestial body reckened euen fro the halfe of the heed of Aries vnto the ende of Pisces, and his latitude is reckened after ý quantite of his declinacyon North or South, towarde the poles of this werke. As thus if it be of ý sonne or any fix starre, reken hys latytude or his declynacyon fro the equinoctial cercle, and if it be of a planet, reken than the quantite of hys latytude from the ecliptike lyne, al be it so ý from the equinoctial may the declynacion or the latitude of any bodi celestial be reckened, after ý syght North or South, and after ý quantite of his declynacion. And yet so may the latitude or the declynacyon of anye body celestyal, saue onely of the sonne, after his syght North or South. And after the quantite of his declinacyon be reckened from the ecliptike line, fro which line al planetes & fixe ne decline, North or Southe, saue onely the forsayde Sonne.

To knowe the degrees of longitudes of fixe starres, after that they ben determinat in thyn astrolabye, if it so be that they ben truely set.

Sette the center of the sterre upon the lyne meridional, and take kepe of thy zodyake, and loke what degree of anye syngne fixe upon the same lyne meridyonal at the same tyme, and there the degre in whiche the sterre standeth, and with the same degre reketh ý same sterre vnto ý same line from ý orizonte.

To knowe in especial the latytude of our centre, I meane after the altytude of the sonne or the hyght of our pole.

Vnderstande well that as farre as the heed of Aryes or Libra in the equinoctial fro me our orizonte, as is the fyxed from the pole arctyke, as fer as the pole arctyke from the orizonte, as the equinoctial is ferre from the fyxed, I preue it thus by the latytude of ý orizontye, vnderstande wel that the heyght of our pole arctike from our north orizonte

zenyth is.51.degrees,and.50.mynutes,than is the sonne from the pole artike.38.degrees & 10.mynutes,than is the equinoctial from our zenyth.51.degrees,and.50.mynutes,that is our south the orizonte from our equinoctial.38.degrees,and.10.mynutes.Understande well this reknyng also,forget not that the sonne is.22.degrees of heyght from the orizonte,and our equinoctial is.52.degrees from our pole artike.Also thys shorte rule is for that the latytude of any planet in a regyon is the distaunce from the sonne vnto the equinoctial.

¶ To proue the latytude of any place in a regyon by the prefte of the heyght of the pole artyke in that same place.

IF some louers myght whan the firmament is clere & thicke sterred,haue a tunyng fyne,euery sterre fixe in the fyrst perpendiculer ouer y pole artik,& espe yfte.2.haue another sterre lyne right vnder.1.& vnder the pole,and espe y sterre.1.& vnderstande well y.1.is not considred but onely to declare that.2.fyne ouer y pol.¶ take than anone right the altytude of.2.from the orysonte & fourte it not,in.3.and.4.go tarying tyl agayne the planet haue a great while,and come than again,and abyde tyl that.3.is euen vnder the pole vnder.4.for so shalt thou wyt.4.for ouer the pol,take than ettsones the altytude of.3.from the orysonte,and note as well the seconde altytude as the fyrst altytude.And whan that this is done,reken howe many degrees y the fyrst altytude.3.exceded his altytude,take halfe the like porcion y is exceded,& adde vnto his seconde altytude,and take there the elevacion of the pole,and che the altytude of thy regyon,for these two be of one nombre,& therefore haue as many degrees as thy pol is elevat,so made is the latytude of thy regyon.Example as thus,I take vncunyng the altytude of.3.in the morninge is.20.degrees of heyght,than wyt the seconde altytude of the planet be.20.& is to sayne,lesse than.20.that was his fyrst altytude at euen.¶ take than halfe of.10.and it is.5.that was hys seconde altytude,& this halfe than the heyght of the pol & the latytude of thy regyon.But vnderstande well to proue this conclusion and many another faire conclusyon,thou mayst haue a planet hangynge on a lyne hygher than thy hede,or a perche & that lyne mote hange euen perpendiculer betwixte the pole and thyne eye,and than shalte thou se yt.3.lyt euen ouer the pole and ouer yt.4.at euen.And also yt.4.lyt euen ouer y pole and ouer.3.or haye.

¶ Another conclusyon to proue the heyght of the pole artyke from the orysonte.

TAke any sterre fyxe that euer descendeth vnder the orysonte in thyne regyon,and considre his heyghest altitude and his lowest altytude from the orysonte,and make a nombre of these altytudes,take than and abate halfe that nombre,and take there the elevacion of the pole artyke in that same regyon,for the more declaracion of.

Another conclusyon to proue the latytude of a regyon that ye haue.

VNderstande well that the latytude of any place in a regyon is alwaye the space betwixte the sygne of heven called there,y equinoctial circle,made by takynge the measure in the prymerydyen as betweth the almycantars of the same,and the space as mesured betwixte the zenyth & the equinoctial.

hast thou the highest of the heedes of Aries & Libra, as thus. Thy Sonne paraventure is in the .10. degre of Leo almoste, & .6. of heyght at noone, & his declynacion is almost .18 degrees northwarde from the equinoctial, abate than thilke .18. degrees of declinacion out of ỳ altitude at noone, thā leveth .38. degrees, lo there the heed of Aries or Libra & thyn equinoctial in that regyon. Also if it so be that the Sōnes declinacion be southwarde frō the equinoctial, adde than thilk declinacion to the altitude of the Sonne at noone, & take there the heedes of Aries and Libra & thyn equinoctial, abate than the heyght of the equinoctial out of .90. degrees, & than leveth there .38. degrees, that is the distaunce of the regyon from the equinoctial of any sterre fyxe that thou knowest & take the neither elongacion lengthing from the same equinoctiall lyne, and werke after ỳ maner aforesayd.

¶ Declaracion of the ascencion of sygnes as wel in the circle directe, as in obliyque.

The excellence of the sphere solide amonges other noble conclusyons therwith manifest the dyuers ascencions of signes in dyuers places, as wel in rizt cercles as in emboly te cercle. These auctours writen ỳ thilke signe is cleped of right ascencion, with which the more part of the cercle equinoctial and the lesse parte of the zodiake ascendeth, & thilke signe ascendeth emboly te, with which the lesse of the zodiake equinoctial, & the more parte of the zodyake ascendeth, and euermore the arche of the day and the arche of the night is there ylyke longe, & the sonne twyse euery yere passyng thzough the signes of her heed & 2. somers and .2. wynters in a yere haue these forsayde people, and the almycanteras in her Astrolabye ben streyght as a lyne, so hathe shewed in this figure. The vtilities to know the ascencions of signes in the right circle is this. Trust wel that be mediacyons of thilke ascencions these Astrologyens by her tables and her instrumentes knowen verely the ascēcion of euery degre and minute in al the zodiake in the emboly te cercle, as shal be shewed. And note that this forsayd right orizonte ỳ is cleped orizont rectum, deuideth the equinoctial in to right angles, and emboly te orizonte, where as the pole is enhaunced vpon ỳ orizonte, ouercometh the equinoctial emboly te angles.

¶ This is the conclusion to knowe the ascencyons of sygnes in the right cercle, that is circulus directus.

Sette the heed of what signe the lyst to knowe the ascendynge on the ryght cercle vpon the lyne merydyonal, and wayte where thyn almury toucheth the bordure, & set there a pryke, tourne than thy rete westwarde tyl the ende of the forsayd signe, sette vpon the merydyonal lyne, & ekfsones wayte where thyn almury toucheth ỳ bordure, and set there another pricke. Reken than the nombres of degrees in the bordure betwixe both prickes, & take than the ascencion of the signe in the right cercle, and thus maist thou werke wyth euery porcyon of the zodyake.

¶ To knowe the ascencyons of signes in the emboly te cercle in euery regyon, Imene in circulo obliquo.

Sette the heed of the sygnes whiche as the lyste to knowe hys ascencyon vpon the Est orizonte and wayte where thyne almury toucheth the bordure, and sette there a pricke, tourne than thy rete vpwarde tyl the ende of the same signe, set vpon the Est orizonte and wayte ekfsones where as thyne almury toucheth the bordure, & set there another pricke, reken than the nombre of the degrees in the bordure bytwixe both prickes, & take there the ascencion of the signe in the emboly te cercle. And vnderstand wel, that al the sygnes in the zodiake, from the heed of Aries vnto the ende of Virgo, ben cleped signes of the Northe from the equinoctial, & these signes arisen betwyxe the very Est and the verye Northe in our orizont generally forever: and al the sygnes from ỳ heed of Libra vnto the ende of Pisses, bē cleped sygnes of ỳ southe fro the equinoctial, and these signes arysen euermore betwyxe the very Est and the very southe in our orizonte, also euery sygne betwyxe the heed of Capricorne vnto the ende of Gemini aryseth in our orizonte in lesse thi two houres equales, and these same signes from the heed of Capricorne vnto the ende of Gemini bē called tortuous signes or croked sygnes, for they risen emboly te in our orizont and these croked signes ben obedient to ỳ signes that ben of the right ascencion. These signes

nes of right ascēcion ben fro the heed of Cancer vnto the heed of Sagittary, and these signes arysen more vpryght than doth the other and therfore they ben called soueraine signes and euery of hem aryseth in more space than in two houres, of which sygnes Gemini obeyeth to Cancer, and Taurus to Leo, and Aries to Virgo, Pilles to Libra, Aquarius to Scorpio, and Capricorne to Sagittary, and thus euermore two sygnes that ben like ferre from the heed of Capricorne obeyeth euerych of hem to other.

¶ To knowe fully the foure quarters of the world, as Est, west, South, & North.

TAke the altytude of the sonne whan thou lyste, and note well the quarter of the worlde in whyche the sonne is from the tyme by the almutes, tourne than thyn astrolaby and set the degree of the sonne in the almycantras of his altytude, on thylke syde that the Sonne standeth, as is in maner of taking of houres, and ley thy label on the degre of the Sonne, and reken howe many degrees of the Sonne ben betwene the lyne meridional and the poynt of thy label, and note wel the nombres. Tourne than agayne thyne astrolabye, and set the poynt of thy great rule there thou takest thyn altitudes vpon as many degrees in his bordure from hys meridonall, as was the poynte of thy label from the lyne meredyonall on the wombe syde. Take than thyne Astrolabye with both handes fast and fyly, and let the sonne shyne throughe bothe holes of thy rule, and stylly in thilke tyme ley thyne astrolaby couche adoun euen vpon a playne grounde, & than wyll the meridional lyne of thyn astrolaby be euen southe, and the Est lyne wyll lye euen Est, and the West lyne west, and ỳ North lyne Northe, so that thou werke softely and auysely in ỳ couchynge, and thou haste thus the foure quarters of the fyrmament. &c.

¶ To knowe the altitude of planettes from ỳ way of the sonne, whether they ben north or south fro the way aforesayde.

IOhe whan a planette is on the lyne meridyonal, yf that her altytude be of the same heyghte, that is the degree of the Sonne for that daye, and than is the planette in the very way of the sonne, and hath no latitude. And yf ỳ altitude of the planette be hyer than the degree of the Sonne, than is the planette North from the waye of the sygne Southe, a quantite of latytude as theweth by thyne almicantras and yf the altytude be lesse than the degree of the sonne, thanne is the planette South from ỳ way of the Sonne, suche a quantyte of latytude as theweth by thyne almycantras. This is to sayne from the waye of the Sonne in euery place of the zodyake, for on the morowe the sonne wyll be in another degre.

¶ For to knowe the sygnes for the arysing of the Sonne, this is to sayne, the party of the orysonte in whyche the Sonne aryseth.

THou must fyrst consyder ỳ the Sonne aryseth not in the very Est sygnes, somtyme by Northe est & somtyme by southe Est, forthy the sonne aryseth euermore in the verye Est in oure orisont, but yf he be in the heed of Aries or Libra. For in thyne orisont departed in to 24 partes of the mynutes in sygnyfycacyon of 24 partes of the worlde, though it be so that ỳ sonne renne all that parties in a. Than is there none but wayte in the whiche minute that ỳ sonne entreth at his arysynge, and take there the ner of the rysyng of the sonne.

¶ The maner of deuysyon of them astrolabie is thus enioyned, as in this table.

FYrst it is deuyded in foure places parties pally with the lyne that cometh fro the Est to the West, and than with another lyne that gothe fro the South to the Northe, than is it deuyded in smale parties of minutes, as Est and est by south, where that is ỳ first minute aboue the est lyne, and so forth fro partye to partye tyl ỳ thou come agayne to ỳ est lyne. Thus thou myghte vnderstande the sygnes of euery Aerte in which partye he ariseth.

¶ To knowe in which partye of the firmament is the conjunction.

CONsyder the tyme of the conjunccyon by the kalender, as thus: howe, thanne houres that the conjunccyons fro myddaye of the day before, as theweth the canon of the kalender. Reken than that nombre in the bordure of thyne astrolabye, as thou were wont

to do in knowyng of the houres of the day or of the night, and lay thy label ouer the degree of the sonne, than wyl the poynte of the label syt vpon the houre of the coniunction. Loke than in whiche minute the degree of the sonne sytteth, and in that partie of the firmament is the coniunction.

¶ To know the sygner of the altitude of the sonne.

This is no more to say, but any tyme of the day take the altitude of the sonne, and by the minutes in whiche he ascendeth thou might som whiche partie of the firmament he is, & in the same wyse might thou se by night of any sterre whether he lie est, West, or south, or any part bitwixe, after ỹ name of the minutes in which the sterre standeth.

¶ To know forthly the longitude of the mone or any planet that hath no latitude fro the tyme of the ecliptike lyne.

Take the altitude of the mone, and reke̅ thyn altitude vp among thyne almicãtras on which side that the mone standeth, & set there a pricke. Take than anon rizt vpon the mones side ỹ altitude of euery sterre fixe that thou knowest, and set his cercle vpō his altitude amonge thyne almicantras there ỹ sterre is foũden, wayte than of which degre the zodiake is, to whiche the pricke of the altitude of the mone, and there take the degree in whiche the mone standeth This conclusion is very sothe of the sterres in thyne astrolabie, & stãdeth after the trouth. Some treatise of the astrolabie maketh mone exception whether ỹ mone haue latitude or none, nor whether syde of the mone the altitude of the sterre be foũde. And note if the mone shewe herselfe by daye, than thou mayst worche the same conclusyon by the sonne as wel as by the sterre fixe.

¶ This is the werchynge of the conclusyons to knowe whether any planet be directe or retrograde.

Take the altitude of any sterre that is cleped a planet and note it wel, anone right take the altitude of some sterre fixe that thou knowest & note it wel also, & come agayne the thirde or the fourth night nexte folowing, for than thou shalte perceyue well the meuynge of the planet whether he meue forwarde or backward, & wayte wel than whan the sterre fixe is in this same altytude ỹ she was whan thou toke her first altitude of the forsayd planet & note it wel, for trust wel if so be ỹ ỹ planet be in the right syde of the meridional lyne, so ỹ his seconde altitude be lesse than ỹ fyrste altitude was, than is ỹ planet direct, & yf he be in the west syde in ỹ condicyon, than is he retrograde, & if so be ỹ this planet be in the est syde whan his altytude is take, so that the second altitude be more than his first altitude, than is he retrograde, and if he be in the west syde of the lyne meridional, than is he directe but the contrary mouynge of these parties is the course of the mone, for forthly ỹ mone moueth the contrarye fro eyther planettes in her ecliptyke lyne, but in none other maner.

¶ The conclusyon of equacyons of houses after the astrolabye.

Set the begynnynge of the degree that ascendeth vpō the ende of the 8 houre inequal, than wyll the lyne of the seconde house syt vpon the lyne of mydnyght, remeue than the degree that ascendeth, and set hym vpon the ende of the 10 houre inequal, than wyl the begynnynge of the 3 house syte vpon the mydnyght lyne, bringe vp agayne the same degre that ascendeth furst, and set him vpon the est orizont, and than wyll the begynnynge of the 4 house syt vpon the mydnyght lyne. Take than the nadere of the degree that ascendeth furst and set him vpon the ende of the 2 houre inequal, and than wyll the begynnynge of the 5 house syt vpon the mydnyght lyne. Take than the nadere of the ascendent and set hym vpon the ende of the 4 houre inequall, & than wyll the begynnynge of the 6 house set vpon the mydnyght lyne. The begynnynge of the 7 house is nadere of the ascēdent, and the begynnyng of the 8 house is nadere of the secōd, and the begynnyng of the 9 house is nadere of the 3 & the begynnig of ỹ 10 house is nadere of the 4 and the begynnynge of the 11 house is nadere of the 5 and the begynnyng of ỹ 12 house is nadere of the 6 house.

¶ Another maner of equacyons of houses by the astrolabye.

Take

TAke thyn ascendent, and than thou hast the 4 angles, for wel thou woste that the opposite is of thyn ascendent, ꝑ is to say, the begynnyng of ꝑ 7 house lyt vpon the west orizont, & the begynnyge of the 10 house vpon the lyne meridional, & his opposite vpon the lyne of midnyght than lay thy label vpon the degre ꝑ ascendeth and tecken than fro the poynte of thy label all the degrees in the bordure til that thou come to the meridional lyne, and departe all thylke degrees in to 3 euen parties, and take there the euen porcions of 3 other houses for to lay thy label ouer euery of these 3 partyes, and than thou might se by the label in ꝑ zodiake the begynnynge of these 3 houses fro the ascendent, that is to saye the 12 nerre aboue thyne ascendent, and than the 11 house and the 10 house vpon the meridional lyne, as I fyrst sayde the same wyse wyrche fro the ascendent down to the lyne of mydnight, and thus thou hast thre houses, that is to saye, the begynnynge of the frende, the thyrde, and the fourth house: than is the nabyre of these thre houses, the begynnynge of these 3 houses that folowerh.

¶ To fynde the lyne meridyonal, to dwel fyxe in any certayne place.

TAke a rounde plate of metal for warping the bordet the better, and make therupon a iust compace a lytel within the bordure, and lay this rounde plate vpon an euen grounde, or some euen stone, or on a euen stocke fyxe in the grounde, and laye it euen by a rule in the myddle of the compace, fyrste an euen pynne or a wyre vpright, the smaller the better, and sette thy pynne or thy wyre by a plome rules ende vpright euen, and let this pyn be no lenger than a quarter, of thy diameter of the compace fro the pynne, and wayte besyly aboute x. or xi of the clocke whan the sonne sheweth, whan the shadowe of the pynne entreth any thing within the cercle of ꝑ compace one heere brede, & make there a pricke with vnke: abyde than fyll wayteynge on the sonne after one of the clokes, tyll that the shadowe of the pynne or of the wyre passe any thing out of the cercle or compace, be it neuer so lytel, and set there a pricke. Take than a compace and mesure euen the myddle betwyxe bothe prycke, and sette there a pricke: take than a rule and drawe a fryth euen fro the pyn vnto ꝑ myddle pricke, and take there the lyne meridyonall for euermore, as in the same place. And if thou drawe a crosse ouerthwarte the compace wisely ouer the lyne meridyonal, than hast thou est and west, and perconsequens the oppositte, that is southe and northe.

¶ Discrypcion of the meridional lyne, and of the longitudes & latitudes of cytees and townes as wel as of climates.

THis lyne meridyonal is but a mesure or cirpsen of a lyne imagined fro the pole vpon the poles of the world, and of the firmament of our heed: & it is cleped the lyne of what place ꝑ any man is at any time of the yere whan the sonne by meuyng of the firmament cometh to his meridyonal place, than is it the very mydday ꝑ we clepe noone, & therefore is cleped the lyne of mydday. Than take heede that euermore of two cytees or townes vnder one meridyan, of which the one approcheth nerer the est than doth ꝑ other towne, shall it not follow that suche townes have diuers meridyanes. Take heede also ꝑ the arche of the equinoctiall that is termed and bounded betwene the two meridyans, is cleped the longitude of the townes: and it so be that the townes have not suche one meridyan, than is the space betwene bothe lynes latitudes: in this maner may not onely meridyans, but parallels be drawen aboute alnycanteras for the haunsynge of the sonne and the distaunce of the same. Also a clymate may be cleped a space of the erthe, fro the begynnyng of the first longe dayes vnto the laste ende of the same clymate where the longest dayes arenit the pole artyke, that is to say, aucours. And some clerkes saye, that it may cleape the latytude of a cyrcle the arche betwyxe the sygner and the equinoctiall: but other saye that the distaunce fro the equinoctiall vnto the ende of the clymate, euen ouer ꝑ poole artyke, is the longitude of the clymate forsayd.

¶ To knowe with what degre of the zodiake that any planet ascendeth in the esterne, where his latytude be north or south.

KNowe by thyne almynake the degree of the ecliptike of any signe, in which ꝑ the planet is reckened for to be, and that is cleped the degre of his longitude.

And know also the degre of his latytude fro the ecliptyke, northe or southe, and by these ensamples folowyng in especial, ȝ maist wirche with euery sygne of the zodyake. The longytude peraventure of Venus or of an other planette was of Capricorne, & the latitude of him northward degrees fro the ecliptyke lyne, than toke I a subtil compace, & cleped the one poynte of my cõpace A, & that other F, thã toke I the poynt of A, & set it in the ecliptike lyne, and my zodiake in the degree of the longitude of heedes, that is to say, in the heed of Capricorne, and than set I the poynt of F, upward in the same sigue, bycause ꝑ the altytude was northe, upon the latytude of Venus, that is to say, in the degre fro the heed of Capricorne, and thus haue I ꝑ degrees betwyxe my two prickes, than layde I downe softly my compace, and set the degree of the longitude upon the orizont, than toke I and warped my labell in maner of a payre of tables, to receyue dystinctly the pricke of my compace, than toke I this forsayde label, and layde it fyxe ouer the degree of my longitude, than tooke I up my compace & the poynte of A, in the ware of my label, as I coude gesse, ouer the ecliptyke line in the ende of the longitude, I sette the point ouer endelonge on the label, upon the space of the latytude inward and on the zodiake, that is to saye northwarde fro the ecliptike: Than layde I downe my compace, and loked wel in the way upon the eclyptike of A, and F, than turned I my reete til that the pricke of F, sate upon the orizont: Than sawe I wel that the body of Venus in her latytude of degrees septemtrionals, asceideth in the ende of degre fro the heed of Capricorne. And note that in thys maner thou myghtest werche wyth any latytude septemtrionall in al sygnes: But southly the latytude meridyonal of a planette in Capricorne may not be take, bycause of the lytell space betwyxe ꝑ eclyptike and the bordure of the astrolabye, and sykerly in all other sygnes it may be take. Also the degre peraventure of Jubiter or of any other planette was in the firste degree of Pisces in longitude, and hys latytude was degrees meridyonall. Than toke I the poynte of A, and sette it in the firste degree of Pisces on the ecliptyke, than set I the poynt downwarde of F, in the same sigue, bicause that ꝑ latytude was south degrees, that is to say, fro ꝑ heed of Pisces, and thus haue I degrees betwixe both prickes. Thã set I the degree of the longitude upon the orizont, than toke I my label and layde him fyx upon the degree of longitude, than sette I the poynte of A, on my labell euen ouer the ecliptike lyne, in the ende of the degree of the longitude, and I sette the poynte of F, endelonge on my labell the space of degrees of the latytude outwarde fro the zodiake, that is to saye, southwarde fro the ecliptyke towarde the bordure, and than tourned I my reete til the poynte of F, sate upon the orizonte, than sawe I well that the body of Jupiter in hys latitude of degrees meridional, asceideth with the degree of Pisces in horescopo. And in this maner thou mayst wyrche with any latytude as I sayd first, saue in Capricorne. And thou wylte plye this crafte with the arysyng of the moone, looke thou reckon well the course of houre by houre, for she dwelleth in a degree of her longitude but a lytel whyle, as thou wost well: but neuertheiesse, if ꝑ legen wel her meuyng by ꝑ tables, or after her course houre by houre, thou shalt do wel ynoughe.

¶ Umbra recta.

If thou wylte wirche with Umbra recta, yf thou myghte come to the base of the towre, in thys maner shalte thou wyrche: Take the altitude of ꝑ toure with both holes, so ꝑ the rule lye euen on a poynte. Ensample, as thus. I se him throughe the poynte of 4, than mete I the space betwyxe me & the tour, & I fynde it 12 foote, than beholde I howe 4 is to 12, and I fynde it is the thirde parte of 12. Right so the space betwixe the & the toure is the third part of the altitude of the toure: than thrise 12 fote is the hyghest of the toure, with addycion of thyn owne body fro thyne eye. Yf the rule fall on 5, than is 5 tymes 12 ꝑ highest of ꝑ toure.

¶ Umbra uersa.

If thou mayste not come to ꝑ base of ꝑ toure, and ꝑ fyxe him throughe the nombre of 1, set there a pricke at thy foote, thã go nere the toure, and se him throughe at the point of 2, and set there another pricke, & than beholde howe 1 hath him to 12, and thou shalte fynde that he hath him 12 fythes, than beholde how

2 haue

haue hym 12, and thou shalte fynde it 6 sythes, and therfore the space betwyxe 2 prickes is 6 tymes thyne altytude. And note that at the first altytude of 1 thou settest a pricke, and afterwarde whan thou seest hym through at 2 there thou settest a pricke, than thou findest betwene 8 foote, than thou shalte fynde that 1 is the 6 parte of 8, than is a fote the altitude of the toure, but yf it fall vpon another poynte as thus. It falleth on 6 at the seconde takynge it, whan it falleth on 4, than shalte thou fynde that 6 is the seconde parte of 12, and 4 is the thyrde parte of 12 by the thirde parte, that is to say, the space betwixe 2 prickes, twyse the height of ỳ toure, & if the difference were 3, than wolde it be thre times the height, & sic de singulis. Another maner werchynge by umbra recta. If thou mayste not come by the base of ỳ toure, worche in this wyse: Set thy rule vpon 1 tyll thou se the altitude, and set at thy fote a pricke, and than set thy rule vpon 2, and so do in the same maner than loke what is the difference betwixe 1 and 2, and thou shalte fynde that it is one. Than mesure ỳ space betwyxe ỳ two prickes, and that is the 12 parte of the altytude of the toure, and so of al other.

¶ Umbra recta,

If thy rule fall vpon the 8 poynte on the right shadowe, than make the fygure of 8, than loke howe moche space of ỳ feete is betwixe the and the toure and multiply ỳ by 12, and whan thou haste multiplyed it by the same nombre, than deuide it by the nombre of 8, and kepe the resydue, and adde therto thy heyght vnto thyn eye, to the resydue, and that shal be the very heyght of the toure. And thus mayste thou worch on the same fyde from one to 12. &c.

¶ Umbra recta.

Another maner of worknyng vpon ỳ same fyde. Loke vpon what poynt thy rule fal leth whã ỳ seest the toppe of the toure thorow the two holes, and than mete the space betwene thy fote to the base of the toure, right as the nombre of the poynt hath hym selfe to 12, right so the mesure betwixe the and the toure, hath hym selfe to the heyght of the same toure. Or ensample as thus. I set case thy rule fall vpon 8, whã is 8 two third partes of 12, so is ỳ space two thirde partes of the toure.

¶ Umbra recta.

To knowe the heyght by the pointes of Umbra recta. If thy rule fal vpon 12 than thou seest the toppe of the toure, set a pricke there thy foote standeth, & go pere tyll ỳ mayste se the same toppe at the poynte of 4, and set there another pricke than mete how many foote is betwixt the two prickes, & the height vppe to thyne eye, and that shal be the heyghte of the toure. And note that 12 is the 4 parte of 12, and 4 is the 3 parte of 12, for 4 paseth 4 the nombre of 3 by twyse the nombre of 3, therfore ỳ same space twyse the heyght to thyne eye, is ỳ heyght of the toure. And if it so fell that ther were rule or thre distances of the nombres, so shuld the mesure betwixe the prickes by twyse or thryse the heyght of the toure.

¶ Umbra recta.

[illegible] a marke there as the [illegible] or further yet thou mayst [illegible] poynt, and make there another marke what differece is betwixe the [illegible] the scale and right as that [illegible] to 12 right so the spaces betwixe [illegible] kes, hath hym to the heyght of the [illegible] sample. I set the case thou [illegible] the poynte of 4, and after [illegible] 4 now paseth the nombre [illegible] ỳ the distaunce of 4 and right as [illegible] of one hath hym selfe to 12 right [illegible] betwixe bothe the markes, hath hym the heyght of the same thyng, putting betwixe the heyght of thy selfe to thyne eye. And thus mayst thou worche from 1 to 12.

¶ Umbra recta.

Furthermore, if thou wylt know in Umbra recta, by the craft of umbra recta. I suppose to take thyne altytude at the poynte of 4 & make a marke, and than thou seest yet yf thou hast it at the poynte of 8 and makest there a

Circum. nother

nother marke, than muste thou deuyde 144 by 4, the nombre that cometh therof shall be 36, and after deuyde 144 by 3, and the nombre that cometh therof is 48, than loke what difference is betwyxe 36 & 48, and that shalt thou fynde 12, & right as 12 hath him to 12, so the space betwyxe the two prickes, hath hym to the altitude of the thyng.

Here endeth the conclusyons of the Astrolabye.

The complaynt of the blacke knyght.

IN May whan Flora ye freshe lusty quene
The soyle hathe clad, in grene, reed, and whyght
And Phebus gan to shede his stremes shene
Amydde the bulle, with all the beames bright
And Lucifer, to chace away the nyght
Aren the morowe our orizont hath take
To byd al louers out of her slepe awake

And herres heur for to recomforte
From dreryhed of heuy nightes sorowe
Nature had hem eyle, and hem disporte
Aren the goodly glad grey morowe
And hope also, with feynt Johan to borowe
Had in dispyte of Daunger and Dispayre
For to take the holsome lusty ayre

And with a syghe I gan for to abreyde
Out of my slombre, and sodaynly vp sterte
As he that alas that nygh for sorowe deyde
Wy sycknesse sare ave sonye my herte
But for to fynde socour of my smerte
Or at the lest some relegle of my peyne
That me so sore halte in euery veyne

I rose anon, and thought I wolde gone
Into the wodde, to here the bridres synge
Whan that the mysty vapoure was agone
And clere and fayre was the morwyng
The dewe also lyke syluer in shynyng
Vpon the leaues, as any baume swete
Eyl fyry Tyran with his persaunt hete

Had dryed vp the lusty lycour newe
Vpon the herbes in the grene mede
And that the floures of many dyuers hewe
Vpon her stalkes gon for to spredc
And for to splaye out her leues in brede
Ageyne the sonne, golde burned in his spere
That downe to hem cast his beames clere

And by a ryuer forth I gan coste
Of water clere, as byrel or crystal
Tyl at the last I founde a lytel wey
Towarde a parke, enclosed with a wal
In compace rounde, and by a gate smal
Who so that wold, freely myght gone
Into this parke, walled with grene stone

And in I went to here the bridres songe
Which on the braunches, both in plain & bale
So loude sange, that al the woode rongc
Lyke as it shulde shyuer in peces smale
And as me thought, that the nyghtyngale
With so great myght, her voice gan out wrest
Right as her herte for loue wolde brest

The soyle was playn, smoth, & wonder soft
Al ouerspradd with tapettes that Nature
Had made her selfe: couered eke a loft
With bowes grene, the floures for to cure
That in her beaute they may long endure
From al assaute of Phebus fer ne nere
Which in his sphere so hotte shone and clere

The eyre attempre, and the smothe wynde
Of zepherus, amonge the blosomes whyte
So holsom was, & so norisshyng by kynde
That smale buddes, and rond blosomes lite,
In maner gan of her brethe delyte
To yeue vs hope there feute shal take
Ayenst Autumpne redy for to shake

I sawe the Daphene closed vnder synde
Grene Laurer, and the holsome Pyne
The Wyne also, that wepeth euer of kynde
The Cedres hye, vpright as a lyne
The Fylberte eke, ye lowe doth enclyne
Her bowes grene, to the erthe adoun
Vnto her knyght called Demophoun

There sawe I eke the freshe hauthorne
In whyte motley, that to swote doth smel
Al he, fyre, & oke, with many a yong acorne
And many a tree mo than I can tel
And me before I sawe a lytel wel
That had his course, as I gan beholde

under an hyl, with quicke stremes colde

The gravel golde, the water pure as glasse
The bankes rounde, the wel enuyronyng
And softe as velvet the yonge grasse
That therupon lustely came springynge
The sute of trees about compassynge
Her shadowe caste, closyng the wel rounde
And al the herbes growyng on the grounde

The water was so holsome, and so vertuous
Thorowe might of herbes growyng besyde
Not lyke the welle where as Narcisus
Slayne was, thorow vengeaunce of Cupide
Where so couertly he dyd hyde
The grayne of dethe vpon eche brynke
That dethe mote folowe, who y^t euer drynke

Nelyke the pytte of the Pegace
Under Parnaso, where poetes slepte
Nor lyke the welle of pure chastyte
Whiche y^e Diane with her nymphes kepte
When she naked in to the water lepte
That slowe Acteon with her houndes fel
Onely for he came so nyghe the wel

But thys welle that I here reherse
So holsome was, that it wolde aswage
Sollen hertes, and the venym perce
Of pensyfehed, wythal the cruel rage
And ouermore refreshe the vysage
Of them that were in any werynesse
Of great labour, or fallen in dystresse

And I y^t had thorowe daunger & disdayne
So dyuerse a thrust, thought I wolde assay
To taste a draught of thys welle or twayne
My bytter langour if it myght alaye
And on the banke anone downe I laye
And with myne hed, vnto y^e welle I raught
And of the water dranke I a good draught

Wherof me thought I was refreshed wele
Of the brennyng that sate so nye my herte
That verely anone I gan to fele
In huge parte released of my smerte
And therwithal anone vp I sterte
And thought I wolde walke and se more
Forthe in the parke, and in the holtes hore

And through a launde as I yede a pace
And gan aboute kaste to beholde
I founde anone a delectable place
That was beset with trees yonge and olde
Whose names here for me shal not be tolde
Amydde of whiche stode an herbet grene
That becked was, with colours new & clene

Thys herbet was ful of flowres gende
In to the whiche, as I beholde gan
Betwyxte an hulfere and a wodbende
As I was ware, I sawe where lay a man
In blacke, and whyte colour pale and wan
And wonder deedly also of hys hewe
Of hurtes grene, and fre the wounes newe

And ouermore dystrayned with sekenesse
Besyde al thys he was ful greuously
For vpon hym he had an hote accesse
That day by day hym shoke ful pereously
So that for constraynynge of hys malady
And herty wo, thus lyenge al alone
It was a dethe for to here hym grone

Wherof aslowed, my fote I gan withdrawe
Greatly wondrynge what it myght be
That he so lave, and had no felawe
For that I coude no wyght with hym se
Wherof I had routhe, and eke pyte
And gan anone, so softely as I coude
Amonge the bushes prively me to shroude

If that I myght in any wyse aspye
What was the cause of hys deedly wo
Or why that he so pereously gan crye
On hys fortune, and on her also
With al my myght I layed an eare to
Euery worde, to marke, what he sayde
Out of hys swough amonge as he abrayde

But fyrst, if I shulde make mencyon
Of hys persone, and playnly hym discryue
He was in sothe, without exception
To speke of manhode, one the best on lyue
There may no man ayen reason stryue
For of hys tyme, and of hys age also
He proued was, there men shold haue ado

For one the best therto of brede and lengthe
So wel ymade by good proporcyon
If he had ben hys delyuer strength
But thought and sekenesse were occasyon
That he thus lay in lamentacyon
Grutte on the grounde, in place desolate
Sole by hym selfe, awhaped and amate

And for me semeth that it is fytting
Hys wordes al to put in remembraunce
To me that heard al hys complaynyng
And al the grounde of hys woful chaunce
If there with al I may you do pleasaunce
I wol to you so as I can anone
Lyke as he sayde, therefe eurrychone

But who shal helpe me nowe to complayne
Or who shal nowe my lyfe gye or lede
O Mysbe, let nowe thy teares rayne
In to my penne and helpe eke in nede
Thou woful Pyte, y tele I myne herte blede
Of pytous wo, and myn hande eke quake
Whan that I write, for thys mannes sake

For vnto me accordeth complayning
And doleful chere and heuynesse
To forthe me also, sighyng and weping
And pytous mourning and distresse
And who that shal write of dulfulle
In partye nedeth to knowe feryngle
Cause and roote of al suche malady

But I alas, that am of wytte but dul
And haue no knowyng of suche matere
For to discryue, and write at the ful
The woful complaynte, which y e shal here
But euen lyke as he the a skrimmere
That can no more, what that he shal write
But as hys maister before doythe endyte

Right so fare I, that of no sentement
Ware right naught in conclusyon
But as I herde whan I was present
This man complayne, with a pytous soun
For euen lyke without abbreuiacion
Or discrecyon, eyther more or lesse
For to reherse anone I wol me dresse

And if that any nowe be in thys place
That sele in loue byrnynge or feruence
Or hyndred were to hys ladyes grace
With false tonges, that with pestylence
Slee trewe men, that neuer hyb offence
In worde nor dede, ne in her entent
If any suche be here nowe present

Let hym of routhe lay to audyence
With doleful chere, and to be countenaunce
To here thys man, by ful hys sentence
Hys mortal wo, and hys perturbaunce
Complayning, nowe lyeng in a traunce
With lokes vpcast, and ruful chere
The effecte of whiche was as ye shal here.

The thought oppressed w inward sighes sore
The paynful lyfe, the body languishyng
The woful gost, the hert rent and tore
The pytous chere pale in complaynyng
The deedly face, lyke ashes in shynyng
The salte teares that from myn eyen fal
Perce I declare, grounde of my paynes al

Whose herte is grounde to blede in heuynesse
The thought resorte of wo, & of complaynte
The brest is chest of dole and drerynesse
The body eke so frele and so fayntc
With hote and colde myne ares is so marter
That nowe I chyuer, for defaute of heate
And hote as glede, nowe sodaynly I sweate

Nowe hote as fyre, now colde as ashes dede
Now hote for colde, now cold for hete agayn
Nowe colde as yse, nowe as coles rede
For here I brenne, & thus betwyxe twayne
I pasfed am, and al forcaste in payne
So that my hete playnly as I fele
Of greuous colde is cause euery dele

This is the colde of inwarde hye despayre
Colde of despyte, and colde of cruel fere
This is the colde y e cuet doth his besy payne
Armed trouthe to fyght and debate
This is the colde that the fyre abate
Of trewe meaning, alas the harde whyle
This is the colde that wol me begyle

For euer the better that in trouth I mene
With al my myght faythfully to serue
With herte and al to be diligent
The lesse thanke, alas I can deserue
Thus for my trouth daunger doth me sterue
For one that shulde my deth of mercy let
Hath made despite newe his swerde to whette

Agayns me, and hys arowes to fyle
To take vengeaunce of wylful cruelte
And tonges false through her sleyghty wyle
Han gone a werre, that wyl not stynted be
And false enuye, wrathe and enuyte
Haue conspired agayns al right and lawe
Of her maystre that trouth shalbe slawe

And male bouche gan first the tale tel
To sclaundre trouth of vnbrigaciou

And

And falſe reporte ſo loude range the bel
That myſbyleſe and falſe ſuſpection
Haue trouthe brought to hys dampnation
So that alas, wrongfully he dyeth
And falſeneſſe nowe hys place occupyeth

And entred is in to trouthes londe
And hath therof the ful poſſeſſyon
O rightful god that ſuffreſt trouthe ſonde
Howe may thou ſuffre ſuche oppreſſyon
That falſhed ſhulde haue iuriſdiction
Introuthes ryght to ſlee hym gyltles
In his fraunchyſe he may not lyue in pees

falſly accuſed, and of hys foone forſwoge
Without anſwere, while he was abſent
He dampned was, and may not be excuſed
For cruelte ſate in iugement
Of haſtyneſſe without aduyſement
And badde Dedayne do execute anone
Hys iugement in preſence of hys tone

Mourcy may none amytted been
Ceruele trouthe ne a worde to ſpeke
To ſaue hym or the iuge lyſte not ſeen
There is no gayne, but he wyl be to ſtrike
Glaſſe of trouthe to the ſcal and dreſſe
Howe may thou ſe thus in thy preſence
Without mercy murdred innocence

O thou god that art of trouthe ſouerayne
And ſeeſt howe I lye for trouthe bounde
In ſore hayne in loues ſtrong chayne
Out at the berbe through gyue with many a
That lykely are neuer for to ſounde wounde
And for my trouth am dampned to the berbe
And not abyde, but drawe alonge the breche

Conſyder and ſe in thyne eternal ryght
Howe that myn herte profeſſed wholom was
For to be trewe with al my ful myght
Only to one, the whiche nowe alas
Of bolnes without any treſpas
Hyne accuſours hath taken vnto grace
And cheriſheth hem, my berbe to purchace

What meneth thys, what is this wonder dreſſe
Of purueyaunce yt I that it cal
Of god of loue, that falſe hem to aſſure
And trewe alas, downe of the whele ben fal
And yet in ſothe, this is the worſt of al me
That falſhed wrongfully of trouth hath ꝓ na-
And trouthe ayenwarde of falſhed beareth
the blame

Thys blynde chaunce, thys ſtormy auenture
In loue hath moſte hys experyence
For who that doth with trouth moſt his cure
Shal for his mede fynde moſte offence
That ſerueth loue with al hys dylygence
For who can fayne vnder lowlyhede
He fayleth not to fynde grace and ſpede

For I ſerued one, ful longe ſythe agone
With al myne herte, body and ful might
And to be trewe my herte cannot gone
From his beſte but holde that he hath bright
Though I be banyſhed out of her ſyght
And by her mouthe dampned that I ſhal be
Vnto my beheſt, yet I wyl euer obey

For euer ſythe that the bande began
Who ſo lyſte loke and in boke rede
He ſhal aye fynde that the trewe man
Was put abacke where as the falſhede
Y furthered was, for loue taketh none hede
To ſlee the trewe, and hath of hem no charge
Where as the falſe gothe freely at her large

I take recorde of Palamydes
The trewe man, the noble worthy knyght
That euer loued, and of hys payne no reſpyte
Howe vnſtandinge his manyfolde trauayle
I oue vnto hym dyd hys great prouyſe
For aye the bet he dyd in euery aſſaye
The more he was hynder by enuye

And aye the better he dyd in euery place
Through hys knyghthode and hardy grace
The ferder was he from hys ladyes grace
For to her mercy myght he neuer attayne
And to his berbe he coude it for refrayne
For no daungere, but aye obey and ſerue
As he beſt coude, playnly ryght the berue

What was the fyne alſo of Hercules
For al hys conqueſt and hys worthyneſſe
That was of ſtrength alone peereles
For lyke as bokes of hym lyſte expreſſe
He ſet pylers through hys hye proweſſe
Away at Gades for to ſignifye
That no man myght hym paſſe in cheualrye

The whiche pylers ferre beyonde Jude
Be ſet of golde, for a remembraunce
And for al that was he ſet behynde
With hem that loue lyſte feble auaunce
For hym ſet laſt vpon a daunce

Againſt

Agaynſt whom helpe may no ſtryfe
For al his trouth he loſte his lyfe

Phebus alſo for al hys pleſaunt lyght
Whan that he went here in erthe lowe
Vnto the herte with Venus fyght
Ywounded was through Cupides bowe
And yet his lady lyſt hym not to knowe
Though for her loue his herte dyd blede
She let hym go, and toke of him no hede

What ſhal I ſay of yonge Piramus
Of trewe Tristram, for al hys hye renowne
Of Achylles or of Antonius
Of Troye, or of hym Palamowne
What was the ende of her paſſyowne
But after ſorowe death, and thanker graue
Lo here the guerdon that theſe louers haue

But falſe Jaſon with his doubleneſſe
Ther was vntrewe at Colkos to Medee
And Theſeus tóke of vnkyndeneſſe
And with theſe two ete the falſe Enee
Lo thus the falſe are in one degre
Had in loue her luſt and al her wyl
And ſaue falſhode, there was none other ſkil

Of Thebes eke the falſe Archite
And Demephoon eke for hys ſhrewde
Ther had her luſt e al that myght be lite
For al her falſhode and great vntrouthe
Thus euer loue alas, and that is routhe
Hys falſe lurgs fourtherth what he may
And herth the true vngoodly day by day

For trewe Troylus was ſtarke with the boze
Amiddes the ſtorm in the grene Bade
For Venus loue he felte al the ſoze
But Vulcanus with her no mercy made
The ſoule chorle had many wyghes glade
Where Mars her knyght and her mayn
To fynde mercy comforte none he can

Alſo the yonge freſhe Ypomedes
Solufty for as of hys corage
That for to ſeeue with al his herte he ches
Italanta ſo fayre of her vyſage
But loue alas quite him ſo his wage
With cruel daunger playnly at the laſte
That with the death guerdonleſſe he paſſe

Lo here the fyne of louers ſeruyce
Lo howe that loue can his ſeruauntes quite
Lo howe he can his faythful men diſpiſe
To ſle the trewe men, and falſe to reſpyte
Lo howe he doth the ſwerde of ſorowe byte
In herres, ſuche as moſte hys luſte obey
To ſaue the falſe and do the trewe dey

For fayth nor othe, worde, ne aſſurance
Trewe meanyng, awayte, or buſynelle
Seruyſe, ne faythful attendaunce
Manhode ne might in artes worthynelle
Purſute of worthyp nor hye prowelſe
In ſtraunge lande riding ne trauayle
Ful lutel or nought in loue doth auayle

Beryl of dethe, nor in ſee ne lande
Hunger ne thurſt, ſorowe ne ſykenelſe
Ne great empriſes for to take on hande
Ne bedyng of bloode, ne manful hardineſſe
Ne ofte wounding at ſautes by diſtreſſe
Nor in parting of lyfe, nor dethe alſo
Al is for nought, loue taketh no hede therto

But leſynges with her flatterye
Through her falſhede, and with her doubleneſſe
And tales newe, and many farned lye
By falſe ſemblaunt and counterfet humblyſſe
Vnder colour depaynte with ſtedfaſtneſſe
With fraude couerd vnder a pyteous fayr
Accepte be nowe rather vnto grace

And can hym ſelfe no wyſer bid in ſtedfaſtnye
With fayned prayre and pleſaunt wordes
They paunce her eyen with falſe ſarquydrye
Vnder meaning of double entendres
Or ſtrike one in her oppynion
And ſaye another, ſo ſet hym ſelfe alofte
And hymſelf trouthe, as it is ſene ful ofte

The whyche thynge, I hyr no me alſo her
Thanked be Venus, and the god Cupyde
As it is ſene be myne openyng here
And by hys arowes that ſtyken in my ſyde
That ſaue dethe, I nothinge abyde
For day to day, alas the harde whyle
Wherein his herte that him lyſte to ſle

Yet wofull herte for to tine a two
For faute of mercy, and lache of pyte
Of her that cauſeth al my payne and wo
And lyſte not ones of grace for to ſee
Vnto my trouthe through her cruelte
And moſt of al I me complayne
That ſhe hath ioy to laughe at my payne

And

And wylfully hath my dethe swore
Wgylteles, and wote no cause why
Saue for the trouthe that I had afore
To her alone to serue faythfully
O god of loue, vnto the I crye
And to thy blynde dowble deite
Of thys great wronge I complayne me

And vnto thy stormy wylful varyaunce
Yment with chaūge and great vnstableneſſe
Now vp now downe, so rennyng is thy chaūce
That the to trust may be no syketneſſe
I wyte it nothynge but thy doubleneſſe
And who that is an archer and is blynde
Parketh nothynge but shoteth by wende

And for that he hath no differeeyon
Without aduyse he let hys arowe go
For lacke of syght, and also of reason
In his shotyng it happeth ofte so
To hurte hys frende rather than his fo
So doth this god with hys sharpe stone
The trew sleeth, and letteth the false gone

And of hys woundyng this is the worst of al
Whan he hurteth both to so cruel myschefe
And maketh the seche for to crye and cal
Vnto hys foe for to be hys leche
And harde it is for a man to seche
Vpon the poynt of deth in ieopardye
Vnto hys foe to fynde remedye

Thus fareth it nowe euen by me
That to my foe that gaue me fyrst a woūde
Fleet al the grace, mercy, and pyte
And namely there where none may be founde
For none my foe my leche wyl confounde
And god of kynde so hath let myne vse
My cure for to haue my woūde to cure

Alas the whyle nowe that I was borne
Or that I euer sawe the bryght sonne
For nowe I se that ful longe afore
Or I was borne, my destenye was ronne
By warrag fyrborne to fre me vt they cōme
For they my dethe thopen or my therte
Onely for trouth I may it not asserte

Thou myghty goddesse also of nature
That vnder god hath the gouernaunce
Of worldely thynges cōmytted to her cure
Dispofed haue through her wyfe puruyaunce
To grue my lady so muche suffysaunce
Of al vertues, and therwithal puruyde
To murdre trouth, hath take bauget to gide

For bounte, beaute, shape, and semelyhede
Prudence, wit, passyngly fayreneſſe
Benigne porte, glad chere with lowlyhede
Of womanhede ryght plenteous largneſſe
Nature dyd in her fully empreſſe
Whā she her wrought, + al ther last disdayne
To hinder trouthe, she made her chāberlayne

Whan mistrust also, and false suspecion
With mysbeleue she made for to be
Cheef of counsayle to this conclusyon
For to exile trouthe, and eke pyte
Out of her courte to make metely free
So that dispyte now holdeth fourth her reyne
Through hasty bileue of tales that me feyne

And thus I am for my trouthe, alas
Murdred + slayn, with wordes sharpe + kene
Of lyeſſe god wote of al trespas
And lye and blede vpon thys colde grene
Haue mercy fwete, mercy my lyues quene
And to your grace of mercye yet I prye
In your seruyce that your mayme may dye

But if so be that I shal dye algate
And that I shal none other mercy haue
Yet of my dethe let this be the date
That by youre wyll I was brought to my graue
Or hastely of that you lyke me saue
My sharpe woundes that bleede and blede
Of mercy, pitie, and also of womanhede

For other charme playnly is there none
But only mercy, to helpe my hyes care
For though my woundes bleede ouer al one
Thys lyfe, my dethe standeth in your grace
And though my gylte be neuer so alas
I aske mercy in al my best entente
Lady to dye, if that ye assente

For there agayne that I neuer serued
In worde ne worke, playnly I me may
Excuse I haue nat to be serued
To dye forthy, and it be so her paye
Yet though it be thus same day
Or whan that euer her lyste to departe
Suffyseth me to dye in your seruyce

And god that knoweth the thought of euery wyght
wyght as it is, in euery thyng thou mayst se
Yet

Yet er I dye, with al my ful might
Lowly I pray to graunt vnto me
That ye goodly, fayre, freshe and fre
Whiche onely slee me for defaute of rothe
Or that I dye, ye may knowe my trothe

For that in sothe suffyseth me
And she it knowe in euery circumstaunce
And after I am wel payde that she
If that her lyst of dethe to do vengeaunce
Vnto me that am vnder her lygeaunce
It lytte me not her dome to disobeye
But at her lustе wylfully to deye

Without grutchynge or rebellyon
In wyl or worde, holy I assente
Or any maner contradiction
Fully to be at her commaundement
And if I dye, in my testament
My herte I sende, and my spirite also
What so euer she lyste with hem to do

And alder last to her womanhede
And to her mercy, me I recommaunde
That lye nowe here betwyxe hope and drede
Abidinge playnly what she lyst commaunde
For brefely this nis no demaunde
Welcome to me while me lasteth brethe
Right at her choyse where it be lyfe or dethe

In this matter more what might I sayne
Lyth in her hande, and in her wyl is al
Bothe lyfe and deth, my ioy and al my payne
And fynally my beste holde I shal
Til my spirite by destenye fatal
Whan that her lyste fro my body wende
Haue here my trouth, & thus I make an ende

And with that worde he gan syghe as sore
Lyke as his hert ryue wolde atwayne
And helde hys peace, & spake no worde more
But for to se his wo and mortal payne
The teres gonne fro myne eyen rayne
Ful pytously for very inwarde rothe
That I hym sawe, so long wishing for trouth

And al this while my selfe I kepte close
Amonge the bowes, and my selfe gonne hyde
Til at the last the wofull man arose
And to a lodge went there besyde
Where al the May, his custome was tabyde
Sore to complayne of his paynes kene
From yere to yere vnder the bowes grene

And for bycause that it drewe to the nyght
And that the sonne his arke diurnal
Ypassed was, so that his persaunt lyght
Hys bright beames and hys stremes al
Were in the waues of the water fal
Vnder the bordure of our occian
Hys charre of golde, hys course so craftily ran

And whyle the twylight & the rowes rede
Of Phebus lyght were beautat alyke
A peyne I toke, and gan me fast spede
The wofull playnte of thys man to wryte
Worde by worde as he dyd endyte
Lyke as I herde and coude hym tho repeate
I haue here set, your hertes to dispoyte

If ought be misse, lay the wyte on me
For I am worthy for to beare the blame
Yf any thynge mysse reported be
To make thys ditte for to seme lame (lame
Through myne vncōning, but for to sayn the
Lyke as this man his cōplaynt dyd expresse
I aske mercy and forgyuenesse

And as I wrote, me thought I sawe a ferre
Ferre in the west lustely appere
Esperus the goodly bryght sterre
So glade, so fayre, so persaunte eke of chere
I meane Venus with her beames clere
That beuy herte onely to releue
Is wonte of custome for to shewe at eue

And I as fast fel adowne on my kne
And euen thus to her gan I to prey
O lady Venus so fayre vpon to se
Let not thys man for his trouthe deye
For that ioy thou haddest whan thou leye
With Mars thy knight, whē Vulcanus fōde
And with a chayne vnuysible you bonde

Togider bothe twaye in the same whyle
That al the courte aboue celestial
At your shame gan laughe and smyle
Ah, fayre lady wylly fonde at al
Comforte to careful, o goddes immortal
Be helpyng nowe, and do thy diligence
To let the stremes of thyne influence

Descende downe, in forthering of the trouth
Namely of hem that lye in sorowe bounde
Shew now thy myght & on her wo haue routh
Er falsе daunger slee hem and confounde
And specially let thy might be founde

For

for to so couer what so that thou may
The trewe man that in the herber lay

And al trewe forther for hys sake
O glad sterre, o lady Venus myne
And cause his lady him to grace take
Her hert of stele to mercy so enclyne
Er that thy bemes go vp to declyne
And er that thou nowe go fro vs adowne
For that loue thou haddest to Adowne

And whan she was gone to her rest
I rose anone, and home to bed wente
For wery me thought it for the best
Prayeng thus in al my best entente
That al trewe, that be with daunger shente
With mercy may in release of her payne
Recured be, er May come eft agayne

And for that I ne may no lenger wake
Farewel ye louers al that be trewe
Prayeng to god, and thus my leue I take
That er the sonne to morowe be rysen newe
And er he haue ayen rosen hewe
That eche of you may haue suche a grace
His owne lady in armes to embrace

I meane thus, in al honeste
Without more ye may rogyer speke
What so ye lyst at good lyberte
That eche may to other her hert breke
On Jalousyes onely to be wreke
That hath so long of his malyce and enuy
Werred Trouth with his tyranny.

¶ Lenuoye.

¶ Princesse pleaseth it to your benygnyte
This lytel dyte to haue in myn de
Of womanhode also for to se
Your man may your mercy fynde
And pyte eke, that longe hath be behynde
Let hym agayne be prouoked to grace
For by my trouthe it is agaynst kynde
False Daungere to occupye his place

So lytel quayre vnto my lyues quene
And my very hertes souerayne
And be right glad, for tho that the seue
Suche is thy grace, but I alas in payne
Im lefte behynde, & not to whom to playne
For mercy, ruthe, grace, and eke pyte
Exiled be, that I may not attayne
Recure to fynde of myne aduersyte.

¶ Explicit.

¶ A prayse of women.

Al thoy lyste of wayuen ryght
to speke
And farre of hem worse than
they deserue
I praye to god that her neckes
to breke
Or on some cuyl deth more than ligiers serue
For euery man were holden hem to serue
And do hem worshyp, honour, and reuerence
In euery maner that they best coude deuyse

For we ought first to thinke on what maneere
They brig vs forth, & what paun they endure
First in our byrth, and syth fro yere to yere
Howe busely they done their besy cure
To kepe vs fro euery myschaunce
In our youth whan we haue no mayster
Our selfe to kepe, neyther by day ne nyght

Alas, howe may we fayr on hem but wele
Of whom we were fostred and vnder
And ben al our socoure, & counforte also
And for our sake ful ofte them selfe lese
Without women were al our ioye lese
Wherfore we ought al women to serue
In al goodnesse, & cunno more saye

This is wel knowen, and hath ben of olde
That women ben cause of al honoure
Of kynd, of bonte, of fayrnesse, & beyng also
Of norture, of wysdom, & of al worshynesse
Therto curtesy, mekenesse, & grounde of al goodnesse
Glad & mery, & trewe in euery wyse
That any gentyl hert can thynke or deuyse

And though any wold trust to your beryng be
And to your fayre wordes wold aught a lone
In good faith me thynketh it were great ruthe
That other women shold for her gylte be blame
That neuer knewe ne wyll nouse of her entente
Me lyst not to here the fayre wordes ye write
Which ye you payne to day to day to endyte

But who may be ware of your tales vntrewe
That ye so busyly payne and endyte
For ye wyl swere that ye neuer knewe
Me salwe the woman, neyther moche ne lyte

Sane onely her to whom ye had delyre
Is for to serue of all that euer ye sey
And for her loue must ye nedes dey

Thā wil ye swere that ye knewe neuer before
What loue was ne his dredful obseruaunce
But nowe ye fele that he can wounde sore
Wherfore ye put you in to her gouernaunce
Who loue hath ordeyned you to serue & do ple
Wal your myst your lyrelyues space sauuce
Whiche endeth sone, but if she do you grace

And than to bedde wyl ye soone drawe
And sone sycke ye wyl you than fayne
And swere fast your lady hath you slawe
And brought you sodeynly in so high a pain
That fro your deth may no man you restrayn
With a daungerous loke of her eyen two
That to your dethe must ye nedes go

Thus wil ye morne, thus wyl ye sighe sore
As though your herte anon in two wold brest
And swere fast that ye may lyue no more
Nerne oone lady, that myght if ye lest
Bringe myne herte somdele in to rest
As if you lyst mercy on me to haue
Thus your vntrouth wyl euer mercy craue

Thus wol ye playne, tho ye nothyng smerte
These innocent creatures for to begyle
And swere to hem, so wounded is your herte
For her loue, that ye may lyue no while
Scarsly so longe as one might go a myle
So wyll they dethe, to bringe you to an ende
But if your souerayn lady lyst you to amēde

And if for routhe she cōforte you in any wyse
For pyte of your false othes sere
So that innocēt weneth yt it be as you deuise
And weneth your herte be as she may here
Thus for to cōfort, a somwhat do you chere
Than wol these tanglers deme of her ful yl
And sayne that ye haue her fully at your wyll

Lo howe redy her tonges ben, and prest
To speke harme of women causeles
Alas, why myght ye not as wel say the best
As for to deme hem thus gyltles
In your herte ywis there is no gentylnesse
That of your own gylt, lyst thus womē fame
Now by my trouth, me thinke ye be to blame

For of women cometh this worldly wele
Wherfore we ought to worshyp hē euermore
And though it mishap one, we ought for to bere
For it is all through our false lore
That day and night, we payne vs euermore
With many an othe, these women to begyle
With false tales, and many a wycked wyle

And if falshede shulde be reckened & tolde
In women, ywys ful trouth were
Not as in men, by a thousande folde
Fro all vices twis they stande clere
In any thyng that euer I coude of here
But if entysyng of these men it make
That hem to flatteren commen neuer slake.

I wold fayne wete wher euer ye coude here
Without mens tysing, what womē did amis
For ther ye may get hē, ye lye fro yere to yere
And many a gabbyng ye make to hem ywis
For I coude neuer here, ne knowen er this
Where euer ye coude fynde in any place
That euer women besought you of grace

There ye you payne, with al your ful might
With all your herte, and all your besynesse
To pleasen hem, bothe by day and night
Praying hem of her grace and gentylnesse
To haue pyte vpon your great distresse
And yf they wolde on your payne haue routhe
And slee you not, sens ye meane but trouthe

Thus may ye se that they ben fauteles
And innocent to all your werkes ylle
And all your crafes that touche falsnesse
They knowe hem not, ne may hem not esse
So sweare ye, that ye must nedes dye
But if they wolde of her womanheed
Upon you rewe, er that ye be deed

And than your lady, and your hertes quene
Ye cal hem, and therwith ye syghe sore
And say, my lady I trowe that it be sene
In what pyte that I haue lyued fal yore
But nowe I hope that ye woll no more
In these paynes suffre me for to dwell
For of all goodnesse, ywys ye be the well

Lo whyche a paynted processe can ye make
These harmles creatures for to begyle
And whan they slepe, ye payne you to wake
And to bethynke you on many a wicked wyle
But ye shal se the day yf ye shal curse yf whyle
That ye so besyly byd your entent

Hem

hem to begyle, that falshede neuer ment

For thys ye knowe well, though I wolde lye
In womens al trouthe and stedfastnesse
For in good faythe, I neuer of hem sye
But moche worshyp, bounte, and gentylnesse
Right cōmyng, fayre, and ful of mekenesse
Good and glad, and lowly I you ensure
Is thys goodly angelyke creature

And yf it happe a man be in disease
She dothe her busynesse, and her ful payne
Auth all her might, him to comforte & please
If fro his disease she might him restrayne
In worde ne dede thy's she wol not fayne
But with al her might, she doth her besynesse
To bringe him out of his heuynesse

Lo what gentylesse these women haue
Yf we coude knowe it for our rudenesse
How besy they be vs to kepe and saue
Both in heale, and also in sekenesse
And alway right sory for our distresse
In euery maner, thus welwe trey trouthe
That in hem is all goodnesse and trouthe

And syth we fynde in hem gētylnesse & trouth
Worshyp, bounte, and kyndenesse euermore
Let neuer this gētilesse, through your slouth
In her kynde trouthe be aught forlore
That in womens, and hath ben ful yore
For in reuerence of the heauens quene
We ought to worshyp al women that bene

For of al creatures that euer were get & borne
This wote ye wel, a woman was the best
By her was recouered ꝑ blys ꝑ we had lorne
And through ꝑ woman shal we come to rest
And ben ysaued, yf that our selfe lest
Wherfore me thynketh, if that we had grace
We oughten honour women in euery place

Therfore I rede, that to our lyues ende
Fro this time forth, whyle that we haue space
That we haue trespaced, pursue to amende
Prayeng our lady, wel of all grace
To bringe vs vnto that blysfull place
There as she & al good womē shal be in fere
In heuen aboue, amonge the angels clere.

¶ Explicit.

The house of Fame

GOd troutne be euer
Dreme to good
For in his wonder thing by
the rood
To my wyte, what cau
sith swemes
Or the mervaylous dr
eames
And why the effects folowyth of some
And of some it shall neuer come
Why that it is an avysion
And why this a revelacion
Why this a dreme, why that a fantome
And nat to euery man lyche euen
Why this a fantome, why that oracle
I not: but who so of these myracles
The causes knowe bet than I
Dēsyne he, for I certainly
Ne can hem nat, ne neuer thynke
To busy my wytte for to swynke
To knowe of her signifyeations
The gendres, ne dyuysyons
Of the stuffe of hem, ne the causes
Or why this to more than thatte
Or neue for swo complexions
Make hem dreme ate fyrste
Or els thus, as other sayne
For the great fraylte of her stomake
Or ablyssement, or by debylyte
Passyon, drede, or great distresse
Or els by dyssordynaunce
Or natural accustomaunce
That some men be to curyous
In study, or melancolyous
Or thus ymaginatyf of drede
That no man may him bere rede
Or els that devocion
Of some, and contemplacyon
Causen suche dremes ofte
Or that the cruel lyfe vnsofte
Of hem that loues ledem
Ete hopen muche or dreden
That purely her impressions
Causen hem to have vysyons
Or elf spyrytes han the myght
To make folke to dreme on nyght
Or elf the soule of proper kynde
Be so prestyne as men fynde

Fifth. That

That it wote what is to come
And that he warneth all and some
Of euerych of her auentures
By auisyons, or by fygures
But that our flesshe hath no myght
To vnderstande it a ryght
For it is warned to derkely
But why the cause is, not wote I
Wel worthe of this thyng clerkes
That treaten of that, and of other werkes
For I of none opynion
Nyl as nowe make mencion
But only that the holy Rood
Tourne vs euery dreme to good
For neuer sythe I was borne
Ne no man els me beforne
Nette I trowe stedfastly
So wonderful a dreme as I.
The tenth day nowe of December
The whiche, as I can remembre
I wol you tellen euery dele
But at my begynnyng truweth wele
I wol make inuocacion
With a deuoute special deuocion
Vnto the god of slepe anone
That dwelleth in a caue of stone
Vpon a streme that cometh fro Lete
That is a flode of hel vnswete
Beside a fulke, that men clepe Cymery
There slepeth aye this god vnmery
With his slepy thousande sonnis
That alway to slepe her wonnis
And to this god that I of rede
Praye I, that he wol me spede
My sweuen for to tel a ryght
If euery dreme stande in his myght
And he that mouerth of all
That is and was, and euer shall
So gyue hem ioye that it here
Or all that they dreme to yere
And for to stande al in grace
Of her loues, or in what place
That hem were leuest for to stonde
And shelde hem from pouerte and shonde
And from euery vnhappe and disease
And sende hem that may hem please
That taketh wel and scorneth nought
Ne it mysdeme in her thought
Through malycious entencion
And who so through presumpcion
Or hate or scorne, or through enuy
Dispyte or iape, or felony
Wysdeme it, pray I Jesus good
Dreme he barefote or dreme he shood
That euery harme that any man
Hath had sythe the worlde began
Befal hym therof or he ryse
And graunt that he may it deserue
Lo, wyth ryght suche a conclusyon
Is had of hys auisyon
Cresus, that was kyng of Lyde
That hygh vpon a gybet dyde
Thys prayer shall he haue of me
I am no bette in charyte.

NOwe herken, as I haue you sayde
What that I mette or I abrayde
Of December the tenthe day
Whan it was nyght, to slepe I lay
Ryght as I was wonte to doone
And fyl a slepe wonder soone
As he that was wery forgo
On pylgrimage myles two
To the corps of saynt Leonarde
To maken lythe, that erst was harde
But as I slepte me mette I was
Within a temple ymade of glas
In whiche there were mo ymages
Of golde, standyng in sondry stages
In mo riche tabernacles
And with perre mo pynnacles
And mo curyous portratures
And queynt manet of fygures
Of golde worke, than I sawe euer
But certaynly I nyst neuer
Where that it was, but well wyst I
It was of Venus redely
This temple, for in purtreture
I sawe anon right her fygure
Naked fletyng in a see
And also on her heed parde
Her rose garlande whyte and rede
And her combe to kembe her hede
Her doues, and dan Cupido
Her blynde sonne, and Vulcano
That in his face was ful browne
But as I romed vp and downe
I founde that on the wal there was
Thus writen on a table of bras
I wol nowe synge if that I can
The armes, and also the man
That first came through hys destyne
Fugityf fro Troye the countre
Into Itayle, wyth ful moche pyne
Vnto the strondes of Lauyne
And tho began the storie anone

As I shal tellen you echone
First sawe I the distruction
Of Troye, through the greke Synon
With his false burthe forswerynges
And with his chere and his lesynges
Made a horse, brought in to Troy
By whiche Troyans lost al her joy
And after this was graued, alas
Howe Ilyons castell assayled was
And won, and kyng Priamus slayne
And Pirrus his sonne certayne
Dispytously of dan Pyrrus
And next that sawe I howe Venus
Whan that she sawe the castel brende
Downe from heuen she gan descende
And bade her sonne Eneas to fle
And howe he fledde, and howe that he
Escaped was from all the prees
And tolde his father, olde Anchyses
And bare him on his backe away
Crying alas and welaway
The while Anchises in his hande
Bare the goddes of the lande
Thilke that enhoseled were
Than sawe I next al in fere
Howe Creusa dan Eneas wyfe
Whom that he loued al his lyfe
And her yonge sonne Iulo
And eke Ascanyus also
Fledden eke, with drery chere
That it was pyte for to here
And in a forest as they went
At a tournynge of a went
Howe Creusa was wonne, alas
That telle nat I, howe that it was
Howe he her sought, and howe her gosse
Bad him fle the grekes hoste
And sayd he must in to Itayle
As was his destyne, for to sayle
That it was pyte for to here
Whan her spyrite gan appere
The wordes that she to him sayde
And for to kepe her sonne him prayde
There sawe I grauen eke howe he
His father eke, and his meyne
With his shyppes gan to sayle
Towarde the countre of Itayle
As streyght as they myghten go
There sawe I eke the cruel Iuno
That arte dan Iupyters wyfe
That hath yhated al thy lyfe
Al the Troyan bloode
Ren and crye as thou were woode
On Eolus, the god of wyndes
To blowen out of al kyndes
So loude, that he shulde drenche
Lorde, lady, groome, and wenche
Of al the Troyans nacion
Without any of her saluacion
There sawe I eke the tempest aryse
That euery herte myght agryse
To se it paynted on the wal
There sawe I eke grauen withal
Venus, howe sore my lady oore
Weping with ful wofull chere
Praying Iupiter on hye
To saue and kepe that nauye
Of that Trogian Eneas
Syth that he her sonne was
There sawe I Ioues Venus kysse
And graunted was of the tempest lysse
There sawe I howe the tempest stynte
And howe with all pyne he wanne
And prively tooke arryuage
Into the countre of Carthage
And on the morowe how that he
And a knyght that hyght Achate
Metten with Venus that daye
Goyng in a queynte araye
As she had ben an huntaresse
With wynde blowyng upon her tresse
And howe Eneas began to playne
Whan he knewe her of his payne
And howe his shyppes brent were
Or els lost he nist where
How she gan him conforte tho
And bade him to Carthage go
And there he shulde his folke fynde
That in the see were lefte behynde
And shortely of this thyng to pace
She made Eneas so in grace
Of Dydo, quene of that countre
That shortly for to tellen the
Became his loue, and let him do
Al that wedding longeth to
What shuld I spede it more aforne
Or payne me my wordes to peyne
To speake of loue, it wol not be
I cane not of that facultee
And eke to tellen of the manere
Howe they first acquainted were
It were a longe processe to tell
And ouer longe for you to dwell
There sawe I graue howe Eneas
Tolde to Dydo euery cas
That hym was tydde vpon the see

Andeete grauen was bowe that she
Wade of him shortly at a worde
Her lyfe, her lone, her lust, her lorde
And dyd to hym al reuerence
And layde on him al the dispence
That any woman myght do
Wenyng it had all be so
As he her swore, and here by demed
That he was good, for he suche semed
Alas what harme doth apparence
Whan it is false in existence
For he to her a traytour was
Wherfore she slowe her selfe alas
Lo, howe a woman doth amys
To lone him that vnknowen is
For by Christ, lo thus it fareth
Ther is not al golde that glareth
For also brouke I wel myn eched
There may be vnder goodlyhed
Couered many a shrende vice
Therfore be no wight so nyce
To take a lone onely for chere
Or speche or for frendly maniere
For this shal euery woman fynde
That some man of his pure kynde
Wol bewen out yarde the fayrest
Til he hem caught that what him lest
And than wol he caules fynde
And shewe how he is vnkynde
Or false or priue, or double was
Al this say I by Eneas
And Dydo and hir owne lest
That loued al to soone a gest
Wherfore I wol say o proverbe
That he that fully wol werth the herde
May safely leye it to his eye
Al thought hir be this is no lye
But let vs speke of Eneas
Howe he betrayed her, alas
And lete her ful vnkyndely
So whan she saw al utterly
That he wolde her of trouth fayle
And wenden from her in to Itayle
She gan to wringe her handes two
Alas (q̄ she) that me is wo
Alas, is euery man thus trewe
That euery yere wol haue a newe
If it so longe tyme endure
Or els the parauenture
And thus of one he wol haue fame
In magnifieng of his owne name
Another for frendshyp sayth he
And yet there shal the thirde be
That is taken for delyte
Lo, or els for syngulet profyte
In suche wordes gan complayne
Dydo of her great payne
As me mette dremyng redyly
Now other authour alege wol I
Alas (q̄ she) my swete herte
Haue pyte on my sorowes smerte
And flee me nat, go nat away
O woful Dydo, welaway
(Quod she vnto her selfe tho
O Eneas what wol ye do
O that your loue ne your bonde
That ye swore with your right honde
Ne my cruel deth (quod she)
May holde you fyll here with me
O, haue ye of my deth no pyte
Wos myn owne dere herte ye
Kno we ful wel that neuer yet
As farre as euer I had wyt
Agyltē you, in thought ne in dede
O, haue ye men suche goodlyhede
In speche, and neuer a dele of trouthe
Alas that euer bad trouthe
Any woman on a false man
Now I se wel, and ful can
Oure wretched women can no arte
For certayne, for the more parte
Thus we ben serued euery chone
How so that ye men can grone
And as we haue you serued
Certaynly we ben disserued
For though your loue left a crafte
Al were vpon the conclusyon
And ye bowe ye beterrayne
And for the more parte be fayne
O welaway that I was borne
For though you my name is lorne
And myne actes robbe and songe
Ouer al this lande in euery tonge
O wycked fame, for there nys
Nothyng so swyfte as she is
O sothe is, euery thyng is wyst
Though it be couerde with the myst
Ne though I myght burne euer
That I haue done recouer I neuer
That it me shal be layd, alas
I blamed was through Eneas
And that I shal thus vngrad be
Lo right as she hath done, nowe she
Wol done eftesones hardely
Thus say the people priuely

But that is done nis not to done
But al her complaynt ne her mone
Certayne auayled her not a stre
And whan she wyst sothely, he
was forth in to hys shyppe agone
She in to chambre went anone
And called on her suster Anne
And gan her to complayne thanne
And sayd, that the cause was
That she first loued him, alas
And first counsayled her therto
But what, whan this was sayd and do
She rofte her seluen to the herte
And deyde through the woundes smerte
Al the maner howe she der de
And al the wordes howe she ser de
Who so to knowe it hath purpose
Rede Virgile in Eneydos
Or the pistels of Ouide
What that he wrote, or that she syd
And nere it to longe to endure
Ye god I wolde it here were
But welaway, the harme and sourde
That hath her ben for suche surquedrie
As men may ofte in bokes rede
And alday seen it yet in dede
That for to thynken it reneis
To Demophon, duke of Athenys
How he forsworn hym falsely
And betrayed Phillis wickedly
That kynges doughter was of Thrace
And falsely gan his trouthe pace
And whan she wyst that he was false
She hange her selfe right for the halse
For he had done her suche surquedrie
For which she starf right as she dyde
Eke to Hipsipyla Medea
And vnto Cenone
And Calipso semyramis
And eke Hermyone to Pirrus
And Dido to Eneas
For he lefte her for Iopes
That made hym take his herte pardee
Right thus sayd she Ethelens
That as me dremed tolde vs
How he betrayed Adriane
The tyme he was a fouler vane
For had he laughed or ytourned
He moste have ben al drenched
Ye Adriane me thinketh he
And for the lak of hym pyte
She made hym fro the herth escape
And he made her a ful false iape
For after this within a whyle
He lefte her slepynge in an yle
Deserte alone right in the see
And stale away and let her be
And toke her suster Phedra tho
With hym, and gan to shyppe go
And yet he had for ought to here
Of al that euer he coude swere
That for the sauen hym hys lyfe
He wolde haben her to hys wyfe
For she desired nothyng elles
In certayne, as the boke vs tellys
But for to excuse this Eneas
Fully the of al his great trespas
The boke sayeth sauns fayle
The goddes bade hym go to Itayle
And leauen Affrikes regroun
And fayre Dido and her toune
To saue Ilyon graue homero Itayle
Than Eneas gan for to sayle
And how the tempest al began
And howe he lefte his dere man
Which that the steme, or he toke kepe
Smote ouer the bord as he slepe
And also saugh I howe Ydale
And Eneas bes be angle
To her vsage for to rele
Hys tender Archeses the fre
And howe he there founde Palinurus
And also Dido, and Dorpheus
And euery the tourment that he
Shalle be, whiche longe is to tel
Al thilke paynes wyl I nat telle
He made rede many a tome
As Virgile or ek Claudian
Or Dares, that Troye wan
The same I fonde al the storye
That Eneas had made in Itayle
And with hym Lauyn hys feste
And al the batayles that be
Was at hym felle and hys knyghtes
Or he had al ywonne hys rightes
And howe he Turnus refte hys lyfe
And wan Lauinia to hys wyfe
And al the mercyfous sygnals
Of the goddes celestials
How wel maugre Iuno, Eneas
For al her deyngne and her compas
Attamed al hys auenture
For Iupiter toke on hym cure
At the prayer of Venus
Which I praye alway save hys

Now

And bs aye, of our sorowes lyght
When I had sene al thys syght
In this noble temple thus
Hey lorde thought I, that made bs
Yet sawe I neuer suche noblesse
Of ymages, nor suche richesse
As I se grauen in thys churche
But nought wote I who dyd hem worche
Ne where I am, ne in what countre
But nowe wyll I out gone and se
Right at the wycket yf I can
Sene ought where stervnge any man
That may me tellen where I am
When I out of the doze cam
I saste aboute me beholde
Than sawe I but a large felde
As farre as euer I myght se
Without towne, house, or tre
Ne busshe, ne graste, ne erved lande
For al the felde was but of sande
As smal as men maye se at eye
In the defence of Lybye
No maner creature
That is vsyned by nature
Dersawe I me to rorde or wylde
Of which thyngs I ful in bylde
From tan an gyn slufroun
Me sawe, and with deuocioun
Myne eyen to the heuen I caste
Tho was I ware, lo at the laste
That fast by the forme on hye
As bryme myght I with myne eye
Me thought I sawe an Egle sore
But that it semed muche more
Than I had any Egle sene
Thys is as forbe as bethe to mene
It was of golde and shone so bryght
That neuer sawe men suche a syght
But yf the heuen had vnsome
Al newe of god anon ryght sonne
So shone the Egles feathers bryght
And somwhat doune warde gan it lyght.

Ecce tibi liber tuus.

NOw herken euery maner man
That Englysche vnder stande can
And vnderstonde al my dreme
to here
For now at erst shal ye here
So sely and so dredeful a vysyon
That I saye neyther Scipyon
Ne kynge Nabugodonosore
Pharao, Turnus, ne Eleanore
Ne metten suche a dreme as this
Now faye blyssful, O Cypris
So be my fauour at thys tyme
That ye me tendyte and tyme (e)
Helpeth, that in Pernaso dwel
Besyde Elycon the clere wel
O thought, that wrote al that I met
And in the treasore it set
Of my brayne, nowe shal men se
If any vertue in the be (e)
To tel al my dreme aryght
Now kythe thy engyn and thy myght
This Egle of whiche I haue you tolde
That with feathers shone al of golde
And whiche that so hye gan to sore
I gan beholde more and more
To serne her beaute and the wonder
But neuer was that dreme of thonder
Ne that thynge that men cal tondre
That smyte somtyme a toure to pouldre
And in his swyfte comminge brende
That so sowythe gan downwarde discende
As this foule whan it beheld
That I a towne nere in the felde
And with his grym pawes stronge
Al with his sharpe nayles longe
Me strenge at a swappe by benne
And with his fourth agayne vp wenne
And carryed in his clawes starke
As lyghtly as I had ben a farke
How hye I can not tellen yowe
For I came vp, I wyst neuer howe
For so astonyed and astoned
Was curtly herte in me stroued
What with his soures and my drede
That al my felynge gan to bede
For mete was a great affraye (e)
Thus I longe in his clawes laye
Til at last he to me spake
In mannes voyce, and sayd a whyle
And be not agast so for thyne
And call me the by my name
And for I shulde be better abrayde
Me to a make, thus he sayde
Right in the same voyce and stevyn
That I with one that I can nevyn
And with that voyce forthe to fare
Me thought I came to me agayne
For it was goodly for be to me
So nas it neuer wonte to be
And here withal I gan to stere

As he me in hys fete bere
Tyl that he felte that I had heate
And felte eke tho myne heatte beate
And tho gan he me to disporte
And with gentel wordes me comforte
And sayd twyse, sayntt Mary
Thou arte a noyous thynge to cary
And nothynge nederhit perde
For also wyse god helpe me
As thou no harme thaitte haue of this
And thys case that betydde the is
As for thy lore and for thy prowe
Lette se, darst thou loke yet nowe
Be ful ensured boldely
I am thy frende, and therwith I
Gan for to wonder in my mynde
O god quod I that madest al kynde
Shal I none otherwyse dye
Whether Ioue wyl me stellyfye
Or what thyng maye this sygnifye
I am neither Enoche ne Helye
Ne Romulus ne Ganymede
That were bore vp as men rede
To heuen with dan Iupiter
And made the goddes botteler
Lo, this was tho my fantasye
But he that bare gan aspye
That I so thought and sayd thys
Thou demyst of thy self amys
For Ioue is nat there aboute
I dare the put ful out of doute
To make of the yet a clerke
Sauf I beare the myrthe-ferre
I wyl the tel what I am
And wherfor thou thaitte, and why I came
To the this, for that thou take
Good heatte, and nat for feare quake
Softly quod I nowe wel quod he
And I that in my tere haue the
Of whom thou haitte trate and wonder
I am Mercurye the god of thonder
Whiche men callen Iupiter
That doth me thy ful ofte fer
To do all hys commaundement
And for thys cause he hath me sent
To the: Derke nowe by thy trouthe
Certayne he hath of the routhe
That thou haitte so truely
Longe serued enuyously
Hys blynde newe Cupido
And sayde Venus also
Without guerdon euer yet
And nethetes hath for thy wyt
Although in thy heed ful lytel is
To make bokes, songes, and dytees
Fayre me, or els in Cadence
As thou best canst in reuerence
Of loue, and of hys seruauntes eke
That haue his seruyce sought, and seke
And parfourst the to prayse hys arte
Although thou habbest neuer parte
Wherfore also god me blesse
Ioue hath te great humblesse
And bertue eke, that thou wylte make
Anyght ful ofte thyne heed to ake
In the studye so thou werkest
And euer more of loue endytest
In honour of hym and praysynges
And in hys folkes fourthe synges
And in her nature al deuysest
And nat hym ne hys folke despysest
Although thou mayste go wrthe daunce
Of them, that hym lyst not auaunce
Wherfore as I sayde erst thys
Iupiter cometh nat of thys
And also beaurse, of other thynges
That is, that thou haitte no tydynges
Of loues folke it wer be glade
Ne of nothynge els that god made
And nat onely to fore countre
That no tydynges come to the
Nor of ony ferre neyghbours
That dwellen almost at the dores
Thou herest nether that ne thys
For certain the labour al done is
And hath made al the werke emong
Whyche of erthe and of metre among
Ther goth beme to fame bouth more and lesse
And also domb as a stone
Thou lyuest as another wight
That hath payed is purgatorye
And lyuest thus as an hermyte
Although thyne abstynence is lyte
And therfore Ioue, through hys grace
Wyl that I bere the to a place
Where that begge the house of fame
And to do the sporte and game
Of some recompensacion
Of thy labour and deuocion
That thou haitte had, to causeles
Of Cupide the rebeles
And thus thys god through hys mercye
Wyl with some manere thyng the quyte
So that thou myght be of good chere
For trust wel that thou thaitte here
Ar we be comen there as I say

No wonder thynges dare I lay
And of loues folke mo tydynges
Sothe sothfawes and lesynges
And mo loues newe begon
And longe serued tyll loue is won
And mo louers casuelly
That ben betyde, no man wote why
But as a blynde man darteth an dare
And more ioly te and welfare
While they fynde loue of stele
Is thrike men, and ouer al wele
Mo discordes and mo talousies
Mo murmures, and mo nouelries
And also mo dissimulacyons
And eke feyned repercussyons
And mo verdes in two houres
Without takour or fygoures
Y made, than grasmes be of sandes
And eke mo beldynge in mo handes
And al some tenouriaunces
Of olde folkes aquerntaunces
Mo loue daves, and mo accordes
Than on instrumentes ben cordes
And eke of loue mo erthemages
Than euer come were in graueages
Wherfo marst thou trowen this
(Quod he no so helpe me god as yis
(Quod I) Mo why quod he for it
Were impossible to my wit
Though fame had al the pres
In al a realme and al dyres
Power that yet he shulde bere al this
Other eyren, other wyres
(Quod he to me, that can I preue
By reason, wolten for to leue
So that thou gyue thyn abstinence
To bokes and to my sentence
First shal thou here where the dwelleth
Right so as thyn owne boke telleth
Her palays standeth as I shal fare
Right euen amydde of the ayr
Betwene heuen, erthe, and see
That what so euer in al these thre
Is spoken in prose or vers
The way therto is so auerse
And fame eke in so lustre a place
That euery sowne mote to it pace
Or what so cometh from any tonge
Be rowned, redde, or songe
Or spoken in secrete or shrede
Certayne it mote thyder nede
Nowe herken wel, for why I wyl
Tellen the a proper skyl
And a worthy demonstracion
In myne ymagynacion
Estray, thou wottest wel this
That euery kyndely thynge that is
Hath a kyndely stede there he
May best in it conserued be
Vnto whiche place euery thynge
Through hys kyndely enclynynge
Moueth for to come to
As than that it is away therfro
As thus. Lo how thou mayste al day se
Take any thynge that heuy be
As stone or leed, or thinge of weyght
And bere it neuer so hye on heyght
Let go thyne hande, it falleth downe
Right so say I by fire or sowne
Or smoke, or other thinges lyght
Alway they strike upwarde on heyght
Light thinges up, and downwarde charge
Or hyr exercise of hem be at large
And for this cause, thou mayst wel se
That euery ayer vnto the see
Enclyned is to go by kynde
And by these skiles as I fynde
Haue I here dwellinge in stede and se
And erthe eke on the erthe be
Thus euery thynge by his reason
Hath his owne proper mansyon
To whiche he seketh to repayre
Where as it shulde nat apayre
Lo this sentence is knowen comthe
Of euery philosophre ful manthe
As Aristotel, and Dan Platone
And other clerkes many one
And to confirme my resoune
Thou wost wel that euery tydynge is sowne
Or elles no man might it here
Now take what I wol the lere
Speche is not but eyre ybroken
And euery speche that is spoken
Lowde or pryue, foule or fayre
In his substaunce is but eyre
For as flame is but ygrued smoke
Right so is sowne eyre ybroke
But this may be in many wyse
Of which I wyl the deuyse
As sowne cometh of pype or harpe
For whan a pype is blowen sharpe
Or elles a trompe, or other wynde
Anon the eyre is al to-brent
And right lo thus by this sentence
Lo, when men harpe strynges smyte
Whether it be moche or lyte
Lo, with the stroke the eyre is broken

And

And right so breaketh it whan men speketh
Thus wost thou wel what thynge is speche
Nowe hens forthe, I wyl thee teche
Howe euerych speche, voyce or sowne
Throughe hys multyplycacyonne
Thoughe it were pyped of a mouse
Wote nedes come to Fames house
I proue it thus, take hede now
Sy erperyence, for yf that thou
Threwe in a water nowe a stone
Wel wost thou it wyl make anone
Aboute rounded as a cercle
Paraunenture, as brode as a couercle
And right anone thou thalte se wele
That whele cercle wyl cause another whele
And that the thirde, and so forthe brother
Euery cercle causynge other
Wyder than hym selfe was
And thus from roundel to compas
Eche abroute other goynge
Causeth of others sterynge
And multeplyenge euermore
Yet it be so farre go
That it at bothe brynkes be
Throughe thou mave it not se
Yet nathelesse, yet gothe it alwaye vnder
Though thou thynke it a grete wonder
And thus of farthe of trouthe I vary
Vnder hym proue the contrary
And right thus euery worde thats
That loude or preue spoken is
Moueth fyrste an eyre aboute
And of hys mouynge out of doute
Another eyre anone is moued
As I haue of the water proued
That euerye cercle causeth other
Right so of eyre my leue brother
Is the eyre in other stereth
More and more, and speche vp bereth
Fro borde to borde, wrode to towne
Ye throughe multyplycacyonne
Yet be at the house of Fame
Take it on creyt or in game
Right nowe I tolde, if thou haue mynde
Howe speche or sowne, of pure kynde
Enclyned is vpwarde to meue
This mayst thou fele wel by preue
And that some stedes vtoys
That euery thynge enclyned is
Vnto hys kynde lyche stede
That the werth it without drede
That kyndely the mancyoun
Of euery lyche speche of euery soun
Be it erthe soule or farre
Hath hys kynde place in eyre
And syth that euery thynge vtoys
Out of hys kynde place vtoys
Moueth thyder for to go
Yet alwaye be there to
As I haue before proued the
It foloweth euery soune perde
Moueth kyndely to pace
As vp into hys kynde place
And thys place of whiche I tell
Where as Fame lyste to dwell
Is fette a myddes of these thre
Heuen, erthe, and the see
As mooste conuenyaunte the soun
Thanne thys the conclusyoun
That euery speche of euery manne
As I the tel fyrste began
Moueth vp on hyght to pace
Kyndely to Fames place
Lo me thus nowe fayrehalfe
Haue I not proued thus symple
Ye, thou nyce fantasye
Speche is grete prodygye
Straunge of playe forthe
Of figures of poetrie
Of colours of rethorike
Perde it oughte the to lyke
Ye harde is, and harde matere
For to compile as for to lere
And scarce, wotte thou not wel thys
And Fame eke and fayre yes
And yet good be to I can
Endyte lyke a lewde man
Syth me lyste come fyrste to halles
Thou mayst haue hem by the ores
Ye palpable they shulden be
Sometyme thys nowe plate I the
Better thynketh the my conclusyoun
A good persuasyoun
Good I it is and lyke to be
Right so as thou hast proued me
Me shal good be, and as I leue
Thou shalte haue it or it be eue
Of euery worde of thys tourne
I prote by experyence
And with towne cares heuen wel
Coppe and rayle, and euery del
That euery worde that spoken is
Commeth to Fames house vtoys
As I haue sayde, what wyltet thou more
And with thys worde vppe he sore
He began, and sayde by saynte Jame

Nowe

Nowe wyl we speke al of game
Howe farest thou nowe (quod he) to me
Wel (quod I) nowe se (quod he)
By thy trouthe yonde adowne
Where that thou knowest any towne
Or house, or any other thynge
And whan thou hast of ought knowynge
Loke that thou warne me
And I anone shal tel the
Howe farre that thou arte nowe therfro
And I adowne gan to loken tho
And beheld feldes and playnes
Nowe hylles, and nowe mountaynes
Nowe valeys, and nowe forestes
And nowe vnneth grene bestes
Nowe ryuers, nowe citees
Nowe townes, nowe great trees
Nowe shyppes sayllynge in the see
But thus soone in a whyle he
Was flowen fro the grounde so hye
That al the worlde as to myne eye
No more semed than a prycke
Or elles was the eyre so thycke
That I ne myght it not discerne
With that he spake to me so yerne
And sayd: Seest thou any token
Or ought, that in this worlde is spoken
I sayde nay, no wonder is
(Quod he) for neuer halfe so hye as this
Was Alexander of Macedon
Kynge Nero of Rome ne Scipion
That sawe in dreame at poynte deuyse
Heuen and erthe, hel and paradyse
Ne eke the wrecche Dedalus
Ne his childe nyce Icharus
That flewe so hye, that the hete
Hys wynges molte, and he fel wete
In myddes the see, and there he dreynte
For whom was made a great complaynte
Nowe tourne vpwarde (quod he) thy face
And beholde this large place
This eyre, but loke that thou ne be
Adrad of hem that thou shalte se
For in this regyon certeyne
Dwelleth many a creatureyne
Of whiche speketh dan Plato
These ben the eyrysshe beestes so
And tho sawe I al the menge
Bothe gone and also flye
Lo (quod he) cast vp thyne eye
Se yonder lo, the Galaxye
The whiche men clepe the mylky way
For it is whyte: And some parfay
Callen it Watlynge strete
That ones was brente with the hete
Whan the Sunnes sonne the reade
That hyte Pheton wolde leade
Algate his fathers carte, and gye
The carte horse gan wel aspye
That he coude no gouernaunce (*)
And gan for to lepe and praunce
And beare hym vp, and nowe downe
Tyl he sawe the Scorpiowne
Whiche that in heuen a sygne is yet
And he for fere loste hys wyt
Of that, and let the reynes goone
Of hys horse, and they anoone
Soone vp to mounte, and downe discende
Tyl bothe eyre and erthe brende
Tyl Jupiter so, at the laste
Hym slewe, and fro the carte caste
Lo, is it not a great mischaunce
To let a foole haue gouernaunce
Of thynges that he can not demayne
And with this worde sothe for to sayne
He gan alway vpper to sore
And gladed me than more and more
So faythfully to me spake he
Tho gan I to loke vnder me
And beheld the eyrysshe beestes
Cloudes, mystes, and tempestes
Snowes, harles, raynes, and wyndes
And thengendrynge in her kyndes
Al the way throughe whiche I came
O god (quod I) that made Adame
Muche is thy myght and noblesse
And tho thought I vpon Dorce
That wereth a thought may flye so hye
With fethers of Philosophye
To passen euerysche Element
And when he hath so farre ywent
Than may ben sene behynde hys backe
Cloude and erthe, and al that I of spake
Tho gan I were in a were
And sayd, I wote wel I am here
But whether in body or in goost
I not pardy, but god thou woost
For more clere entendement
Nas me neuer yet yshent
Than thought I on Marcyan
And eke of Anteclaudian
That sothe was her discripcion
Of al the heuens regyon
As farre as that I sawe the preue
And therfore I can hem leue
With that the Egle gan to crye

(*) (*) (*)

With that the Egle gan to crye
Let be (qõ he) thy fantasye
Wylte thou leme of sterres ought
Nay certaynly (qõ I) right nought
And why (qõ he) for I am olde
Gyf is wolde I the haue tolde
(Quod he) the sterres names lo
And al the heuens sygnes to
And whiche they be: (no force (quod I)
Yes perde (qõ he) wost thou why
For whan thou redest poetry
how the goddes can stellyfy
Bride, fyche, or hym, or her
As the Rauyn and other
Of Arions harpe fyne
Castor, Polere, or Delphyne
Of Athalantes doughters seuen
Powe all these are set in heuen
For though thou haue hem ofte in hande
Yet nost thou nat where they stande
No force (quod I) it is no nede
As wel I leue so god me spede
hem that writen of this matere
As though I knewe her places here
And eke thy scluen here so bright
It shulde shenden al my syght
To loke on hem, that may wel be
(Quod he) and so forth bare he me
Awhyle, and tho began to crye
That neuer herde I thynge so hye
Holde vp thyne heed, for all is wel
Saynte Julyan lo, bonne hostel
Sehere the house of Fame lo
Wayst thou not here that I do
What quod I the great sowne
(Quod he) that rombleth vp and downe
In fames house ful of tydynges
Bothe of fayre speche and chydynges
And of false, and sothe compowned
Herken wel it is not rowned
Herest thou not the great swough
Yes perde (quod I) wel y nough
And what sowne is it lyke (quod he)
Peter, lyke the beatyng of the see
(Qõ I) agaynst the roches hyghowe
Whan tempestes bore her shyppes swalowe
And that a man stande out of doute
Fayle thens, and here it route
Gyf is lyke the humblynge
After the clappe of a thunderynge
Whan Ioues hath the eyre ybete
But it dothe me for feare sweete
Nay, dyede the not therof (quod he)
It is nothyng that wyl byten the
Thou shalt haue no harme truely
And with that worde both he and I
As nyghe the place arryued were
As men myght cast with a spere
I wyste howe, but in a strete
He set me fayre on my fete
And sayd, walke forth a pace
And tell thyne aduenture and trase
That thou shalte synde in fames place
Now quod I whyle we haue space
To speke, or that I go fro the
For the loue of god tell me
Fayne sothe, that I wyll of the lere
If this noise that I here
Be as I haue herde the tell
Of folke, that here in erthe dwell
And comen here in the same wyse
As I the lerde of this deuyse
And that here lyues body nys
In all that house that yonder is
That maketh al this loude fare
No qõ he by saynte Clare
And also wysse god rede me
Lyte o thynge I wyll warne the
Of the whiche thou wylte haue wonder
Lo, to the house of fame yonder
Thou woste howe comeith euery speche
It nedeth not the erre to teche
But vnderstande nowe right wel this
Whan any speche ycomen is
Vp to the palays at one right
It wexeth lyke the same wyght
Whiche that the worde in carry spoke
Be he clothed in reed or blake
And hath so very his lykeneste
And spake the worde that thou wylte gesse
That it the same body be
Man or woman, he or she
And is not thys a wonder thynge
Yes qõ I tho by heuen kynge
And with this worde fare well (quod he)
And here wyl I abyde the
And god of heuen sende the grace
Some good to learne in this place
And I of him toke leaue anone
And gan forth to the palays gone

Explicit liber secundus.

God of scyence and of lyght
Apollo through thy great myght
This lytel laste boke now thou gyve
Nowe what I wyll for mayntrye
Here arte poetycal be thewde
But for the ryme is lyght and lewde
Yet make it somwhat agreable
Though some verse fayle in a syllable
And that I do no diligence
To shewe crafte, but sentence
And yf devine vertue thou
Wylte helpe me to shewe nowe
That in my hed ymarked is
Lo, that is for to meane thus
The house of fame for to discryve
Thou shalte se me go as blyve
Unto the next laurer I se
And hyde me, for it is the tree
Of which entre myn hed ys wrie
Than I was from the eagle gone
I gan beholde upon this place
And certayne or I further passe
I wol you all the shappe devyse
Of house and ryte, and all the wyse
How I gan to this place approche
That stode upon so hye a roche
Ferre fro the lond ne in the se
But up I clambe with muche payne
And though to clymbe greved me
Yet I entremyte was to se
And for to pouren wonder lowe
Yf I coude ony wyse knowe
What maner stone this roche was
For it was lyke a lymed glas
But that it shone full more clere
Ful of whelkes congeled matere
It was, I wylle rehersy
But at the laste espyed I
And founde that it was entayled
A roche of yse and not of stele
Thought I, by saynt Thomas of Ynde
This werke a feble foundement
To bylden on a place hye
Me ought him lyte to glosyfye
That let on brede, god so me save
Tho sawe I all the haly grave
With famous folkes names fele
That had ben in muche welle
And her fames wyde yblowe
But wel vneth myght I knowe
Any letters for to rede
Her names by, for out of drede
They weren almoste of thawed so
That of the letters one or two
Were molte alwaye of everye name (f. 2)
So unfamous was werke her fame
But men saye, what maye ever laste
Tho gan I in myne herte caste
That they were molte awaye for hete
And nat awaye with stormes bete
For on that other syde I sey
Of this hyll, that northwarde ley
How it was writte ful of names
Of folke that had afore great fames
Of olde ryme, and yet they were
As freshe as men had writte hem there
The selfe day, or that houre
That I on hem gan to poure (iii)
But well I wyste what it made
It was conserved with the shade
All the wynterye that I sye
Of a Castell that stode on hye
And stode eke in so colde a place
That heate myght it nat deface
Tho gan I on this hyll to gone
And fynde on the coppe a wone
That al the men that bene on lyve
Ne han the conninge to discryve
The beaute of that ylke place (iv)
Ne coude caste no compace
Suche another for to make
That myght of beaute be his make
Ne so wonderlye ywrought
That it allmyghtyest myn thought
And maketh all my wytte to swynke
On this castel I for to thynke
So that the great beaute (v)
The castel stante and entayllyte
I can I nat to you devyse
For werke ne maye me not suffyse
But natheles all the substaunce
I have yet in my remembraunce
For why me thought by saynt Gyle
All was of stone of beryle
Both the castel and the touce (vi)
And eke the hall, and every boure
Without peces or ony tynges
But many subtell compassynges
As bayeries and pynacles
Imageries and tabernacles
Flakes and fyleting of wyndowes
As flakes fallen in great snowes

And

And eke in eche of the pynacles
Were fondry habytacles
In whiche floden all without en
Full the castell all abouten
Of all maner of mynstrales
And lestours that tellen tales
Bothe of wepyng and of game
And of all that longeth vnto fame
There herde I playe on an harpe
That sowned bothe well and sharpe
Pym Orpheus full craftely
And on this syde fast by
Harpe the harper Orion
And Eacides Chiron
And other harpers manye one
And the Breton Glaskyrione
And smale harpers with her glees
Harpe vnder hem in bryers sees
And gone on hem vpwarde to gape
And counterfayted hem as an ape
Pan craffte counterfete hymde
Tho sawe I standen hem behynde
Farre from hem, al by hem selue
Many a thousande tymes twelue
That made loude mynstralsyes
In commune and chalmyes
And manye an other pype
That craftely began to pype
Hope in bourde and in rebe
That ben at festes with the bride
And many a floyte and lytinge horne
And pypes made of grene corne
As haue these lytel herde gromes
That kepen bestes in the bromes
There sawe I than dan Cyrenus
And of Athenes dan Proterius
And Arestia that lyste her rhyme
Hope in fare, bobbe, and chyme
For that she wolde counten, lo,
To pypen bette than Apollo
There sawe I the famous olde and yonge
Pypers of all the duche tonge
And lytle lowe baunces, springes
Arres, and the straunge thinges.
Tho sawe I in another place
Standynge in a large space
Hem that maken bloudy soun
Of trumpe beme, and clarioun
Hot in fyght and blode debruges
As bled gladly clarionynges
There herde I trumpe Bellenus
Of whome that speketh Vergilius
There herde I Ioab trumpe also
Theodomas and other mo
And al that vsed clarion
In Calabrye, and Aragon
That in her tymes famous were
To lernen sawe I trumpen there
There sawe I fyue in other sees
Playeng vpon other sondrye glees
Whiche that I can not neuen
Ne than sterres ben in heuen
Of whiche I nyl as nowe nat tyme
For ease of you, and losse of tyme
For tyme past, this knowe ye
By no wayes may recouered be
There sawe I playenge iogelours
Pagyciens and tregetours
And phetonysses charmeresses
Olde witches sorceresses
That vsen experimentes
And eke subtyle inuencions
And clerkes eke whiche conne well
All this magyke naturell
That craftely do her enchantes
To makem in certayne aferdenesses
Ymages lo, through whiche magyke
To makem a man beme holde or syke
There sawe I the queene Medea
And Circes eke, and Calipsa
There sawe I Hermes Ballenus
Lymote, and eke Simon Magus
There sawe I, and knewe by name
That by suche arte done men blame
There sawe I Colle tregetour
Vpon a table of Ardenne
Playe an vncouthe thynge to tell
I sawe him carry a wynde mell
Vnder a walnote shale
What shoulde I make longer tale
Of all the people that I sey
I couldne not tellen yll domedey
For than I had al this folke beholde
And founde me loce and noe holde
And I amused a longe whyle
Vpon this wall of gerrile
That shone lyghter than a glas
And made well more than it was
As kynde thynge of fame is
And than anon after this
I gan forthe to romen evll I fonde
The castell yate on my ryghte honde
Whiche so well corueu was
That neuer suche another nas
And yet it was by aduenture
Ywrought by gret and subtyll cure

It nedeth not you more to tellen
To make you to longe dwellen
Of these yates florysshynges
Ne of compaces, ne of karuynges
Ne howe the hackynge in masonryes
As corbettes, and ymageries
But lorde so fayre it was to shewe
For it was all with golde behewe
But in I went, and that anone
There met I eryenge many one
Alarges alarges, holde vp wel
God saue the lady of this pel
Our owne gentyl lady Fame
And hem that wollen to haue a name
Of vs, thus herde I eryen all
And fast comen out of the hall
And thoke nobles and starlynges
And crowned were as kynges
With crownes wrought ful of losynges
And many ribans, and many frynges
Were on her clothes truely
Tho at the last espred I
That pursuauntes and heraudes
That eryen riche folkes laudes
Iwerein, al and euery man
Of hem, as I you tel can
Had on hym throwe a vesture
Whiche men clepe a cote armure
Embroudred wonderly riche
As though they were not ylyche
But nought wot I so mote I thryue
Be aboute to discryue
Al these armes that there weren
That they thus on her cotes weren
For to me were impossyble
Ben myght make of hem a byble
Twenty fote thicke as I trowe
For certayne who so coude knowe
Wyght there al the armes seen
Of famous folke that had been
In Affryke, Europe, and Asye
Sithe first began chevalrye
Lo, how shuld I now tel al this
Ne of the halcke what nede is
To tellen you that euery wal
Of it, and rofe and flore with al
Was plated halfe a fote thycke
Of golde, and that nas not wycke
But for to proue in all wyse
As fyne as ducket in Venyse
Of whiche to lyte al in my pouche is
And they were set as thicke of ouches
Fyne, of the fynest stones fayre
That men reden in the lapidayre
Or as grasses growen in a mede
But it were al to longe to rede
The names: and therfore I pace
But in this lusty and riche place
That Fames hal called was
Ful moche prees of folke there nas
Ne cruodyng, for to moche prees
But al on hye aboue a dees
Satte in a see imperiall
That made was of a Ruby royal
Which that a carbuncle is ycalled
I sawe perpetually yhalled
A femynyne creature
That neuer formed by nature
Was suche another thynge I say
For altherfirst, forth to say
Me thought that she was so lyte
That the length of a cubyte
Was longer than she semed be
But thus soone in a while she
Her selfe tho wonderly streyght
That with her fete she therthe reyght
And with her hed she touched heuen
There as thyneth the sterres seuen
And therto yet, as to my wyt
I sawe a great wonder yet
Upon her eyen to beholde
But certaynly I hem neuer tolde
For as fele eyen had she
As fethers vpon foules be
Or weren on the bestes foure
That goddes trone can honoure
As writeth Johan in the Apocalyps
Her heer that was owndy and cryps
As burned golde it shone to se
And sothe to tellen also she
Had also fele vp standynge eares
And tonges, as on beest ben heares
And on her fete woren sawe I
Partriche wynges redyly
But lorde the perry and the rychesse
I sawe syttyng on the goddesse
And the hevenly melody
Of songes ful of armony
I herde aboute her trone ysonge
That al the palays wal ronge
So songe the myghty Muse she
That cleped is Caliope
And her seuen systerne eke
That in her faces semen meke
And euermore eternally
They songe of Fame tho herde I

Herryed

pcryed be thou and thy name
Goddes of renoun and of fame
Tho was I ware at the laste
As I myne eyen gan vp caste
That this ylke noble quene
On her shulders gan sustene
Bothe the armes and the name
Of tho that had large fame
Alysander, and Hercules
That with a thrette hys lyfe dyd lese
And thus founde I fyrrynge thys goddesse
In noble honour and richesse
Of whiche I spyne a whyle nowe
Other thynge to tellen you
Tho sawe I stande on thother syde
Streyght downe to the dores wyde
From the dees many a pylere
Of metal, that shone not ful clere
But thoughe they were of no richesse
Yet were they made for great nobleesse
And in hem great sentence
And folke of hye and digne reuerence
Of whiche to tell wyl I fonde
Upon a pyller sawe I stonde
Alderfirst there I sye (:-):-):-):-):-):-)
Upon a pyller stonde on hye
That was of lede and of yron fyne
Fyrm of the feete saturnyne
The Ebrayke Josephus the olde
That of Jewes gestes tolde
And he bare on his shulders hye
The fame vp of the Jurye
And by hym stoden other seuen
Wyse and worthy for to neuen (:-)
To helpe hym bere vp the charge
It was so heuye and so large
And for they written of batayles
As well as of other meruayles
Therefore was lo, thys pylere
Of whyche I you tell here
Of lede and yron bothe yfyls
For yron Partes metal is (::)
Whiche that gode is of batayle
And the lede withouten fayle
Is lo the metal of Saturne
That hathe full large whele to turne
To stande forthe on eyther rowe
Of them, whiche I couthe knowe
Thoughe I by order hem not tell
To make you to longe to dwell (:-)
These, of whyche I gan rede
There sawe I stande out of drede
Upon an yron pyller strongе
That paynted was al endlonge
With Cygres blode in euery place
The Cholason that beyght Stace
That bare of Thebes vp the name (:-)
Upon his shulders, and the fame
Also of cruel Achylles
And by hym stode without lees
Ful wonder hye vpon a pylere
Of yron, he the great Omere
And with hym Dares and Tytus
Before, and eke he Lollyus
And Guydo eke the Colempnis
And Englyshe Galfride eke ywis
And eche of these as I haue tolde
Was busy to beare vp Troye
So heuy therof was the fame
That for to beare it was no game
But yet I gan ful well espye
Bytwene hem was a lytel enuye
One sayde that Omer made lyes
Fenynge in his poetries
And was to the Grekes fauourable
Therefore he[lde] he[re]t but fayle
Tho sawe I stande on a pylere
That was of yren[e] tron clere
The latyn poete Stacius
That hath bore vp a longe whyle
The fame of Eneas Troyes
And there hym on a pylere was
Of copper, Tytus clerke Ouyde
That hathe forsen wonders dyuerse
The great god of loues fame
And there he bare vp well his name
Upon thys pylere also hye
As I myghte se it with myne eye
For why this halle wherof I rede
Was wrought on the[r]ghte longe and brede
Well more by a thousande dele
Than it was eek that sawe I wele
Tho sawe I on a pylere by
Of yron wrought ful ryally
The great poete dan Lucan
That on his shulders bare vp than
As hye as that I myghte se
The fame of Tulyus and Pompee
And by hym stoden all these clerkes
That wrote of Romes mighty werkes
That yf I wolde hem names tell
Al to longe must I dwell (:-)
And nere hym on a pylere stode
Of Sulphure, lyche as he were wode
Dan Claudian, for the for to tell
That bare vp al the fame of Hell

Of Pluto, and of Proserpyne
That quene is of the derke pyne
What shulde I more tel of this
The hal was al ful ywys
Of hem that wryten olde iestes
As bene on trees rokes nestes
But it a ful confuse matere
Were al these iestes for to here
That they of wryte, and howe they heyght
But whyle that I beheld this syght
I herde a noyse approchen blyue
That fareth as bees done in an hyue
Agayns hir tyme of out flyenge
Right suche a maner murmurynge
For al the worlde it semed me
Tho gan I loke aboute and se
That there come entrynge into the hal
A tyght great company wythal
And that of sondry regions
Of al kynds condicyons
That dwel in erthe vnder the moone
Poore and ryche, and also soone
As they were come into the hal
They gan on knees downe to fal
Before this ilke noble quene
And sayd, graunt vs lady shene
Som of vs of thy grace aboue
And some of hem she graunted soone
And some she warned wel and fayre
And some she graunted the contrayre
Of her askynge vtterly
But this I say you trewly
What her grace was I nyst
For of these folke ful wel I wyst
They had good fame eche deserued
Al thoughe they were dyuersly serued
Right as her syster dame Fortune
Is wont to serue in commune
Nowe herken howe she gan to paye
Hem that gan her of grace praye
And yet lo, al this company
Seyden sothe, and not a lye
Madame sayd they, we be
Folke that here beseechen the
That thou graunt vs nowe good fame
And let our workes haue good name
In ful recompensacioun
Of good worke, gyue vs good renoun
I warne it you qd she anone
Ye get of me good fame none
By god, and therfore go your way
Alas quod they and welaway
Tel vs what your cause may be
For me lyste it not (quod she)
No wight shal speke of you ywis
Good ne harme, ne that ne this
And with that worde she gan to cal
Her messenger that was in hal
And bad that he shulde faste gone
Vpon payne to be blynde anone
For Eolus the god of wynde
In Trace there ye shal hym fynde
And byd him bringe his clarioun
That is full dyuers of his sowne
And it is cleped clere Laude
With which he wont is to herande
Hem that me lyst ypraysed be
And also vyd hym howe that he
Bringe eke his other clarioun
That heyght Sclaunder in euery toune
With whiche he wonte is to diffame
Hem that me lyst and do hem shame
This messenger gan fast to gone
And founde wher in a caue of stone
In a countre that heyght Trace
This Eolus with harde grace
Held the wyndes in distresse
And gan hem vnder him to presse
That they gone as the bees rore
He bounde and pressed hem so sore
This messenger gan fast crye
Rise vp qd he and fast the hye
Tyl thou at my lady be
And take thy clarions eke with the
And spede the fast, and he anone
Toke to one that heyght Tryton
His clarions to beaten tho
And let a certayne wynde go
That blewe so hydously and hye
That it ne lefte not a skye
In al the welken long and brode
This Eolus no where abode
Tyl he was come to fames fete
And eke the man that Triton hete
And there he stode as styll as stone
And here withal there came anone
Another huge company
Of good folke and gan to crye
Lady, graunt vs nowe good fame
And let our workes haue that name
Nowe in honour of gentylnesse
And also god your soule blesse
For we han wel deserued it
Therfore is right that we be quyt
As thryue I quod she ye shal fayle
Good workes shal you not auayle

To haue of me good fame as nowe
But wote ye what, I graunt yowe
That ye shal haue a shrewde name
And wicked loos, and worse fame
Thoughe ye good loos haue wel deserued
Nowe gothe your way for ye ben serued
And thou dan Eolus (quod she)
Take forthe thy trompe anone let se
That is yeleped Sclaunder wyght
And blowe her loos, that euery wyght
Speke of hem harme and shrudnesse
Instede of good and worthynesse
For thou shalte trumpe al the contrayre
Of that they haue done, wel and fayre
Alas thought I what auentures
Haue these sory creatures
That they amonge al the pres
Shulde thus be shamed gyltles
But what, it muste nedes be
What dyd this Eolus, but he
Toke out hys blacke trumpe of bras
That fouler than the deuyl was
And gan thys trumpe for to blowe
As al the worlde shulde ouerthrowe
Throughout euery regyoun
Were this foule trumpes soun
As swyft as a pellet out of a gonne
Whan fyre is in the pouder ronne
And such a smoke gan out wende
Out of the foule trumpes ende
Blacke, blo, grene, swarty, pearsyne, rede
As dothe where that men melte lede
Lo, al on hye from tewel
And therto one thynge sawe I wel
That the ferther that it ranne
The greater wexen it begonne
As dothe the fyure from a wel
And it stanke as the pytte of hel
Alas, thus was her shame ryonge
And gyltelesse on euery tonge
Tho came the thyrde company
And gon vp to the dees to hye
And downe on knees they fel anone
And sayden, we ben euerychone
Folke that han ful trewely
Deserued fame ryghtfully
And prayde you it myght be knowe
Ryght as it is and forthe blowe
I graunte (quod she) for nowe me lyst
That your good workes shal be wyst
And yet ye shal haue better loos
Ryght in dispyte of al your foos
Than worthy is, and that anone
Lette nowe (quod she) thy trumpe gone
Thou Eolus, that is so blacke
And out thrn other trumpe take
That hyght Laude, and blowe it so
That through the worlde her fame go
Al eally and nat to fast
That it be knowen at the last
Ful gladly lady myne he sayde
And out his trumpe of golde he brayde
Anone, and sette it to hys moupe
And blewe it est, west, and southe
And northe, as londe as ayre thrynder
That euery wyght hath of it wonder
So brode it ran or that it stent
And certes al the breethe that went
Out of his trumpes mouthe smelde
As men a potte ful of baume helde
Amonge a basket ful of roses
Thys fauour dyd he to her loses
And tryghe with thys I gan espye
There came the fourthe compayne
But certayne they were wonders fewe
And gonne to flanden on a rowe
And sayden, certes lady bryght
We haue done wel with al our myght
But we ne hope to haue fame
By de our workes and our name
For goddes loue, for certes we
Haue surely done it for nought
And for no maner other thynge
I graunte you al your askynge
(Quod she) let your workes be deed
With that aboure I tourned my heed
And sawe anone the fyfte route
That to thys lady gan loute
And downe on knees anone to fal
And to her tho besoughten al
To yelden her good workes eke
And sayde, they yeue nat a leke
For no fame, ne such renoun
For they for contemplacyoun
And goddes loue had it wrought
Ne of fame wolde they nought
What (quod she) and be ye woode
And were ye for to do goode
And for to haue of that no fame
Haue ye dispyte to haue my name
Fy ye that lyen euerychone
Blowe thy trumpe and that anone
(Quod she thou Eolus I bote
And tynge these folkes workes by note
That al the worlde may of it here
And he gan blowe her loos so clere
In hys golden clarioun
Through the worlde went the soun

Al so kyndely, and eke so softe
That their fame was blowe a lofte
Tho came the fyrst companye
And gan falle to fame crye
Right verily in thys maniere
They sayden, mercy lady dere
To vs certayne as it is
We haue done neither that ne this
But ydel al our lyfe hath be
But nat beselle yet pray we
That we may haue as good a fame
And great renome and knowen name
As they that haue do noble ielles
And achieued al her quelles
As wel of loue as other thynge
Al was vs neuer vyolde ne tynge
Nor is what so women sent
Ne ones in her herte ymente
To make vs only frendely chere
But mought semen vs on here
Yet let vs to the people feme
Suche as the wyl be may of vs deme
That women loven vs the more
It shal to vs as muche good
And to our herte as muche auayle
The countrepoyse, rafe, and trauayle
As we had wonne with labour
For that is best bought honour
Ne regarde of our great ease
And yf we must vs more preasse
Let vs be holde ne therto
Worthy wyse, and good also
And myche, and happy herto loue
For goddes loue that syttest aboue
Though we may not the body haue
Of women, yet for goddes saue
Lette men glewe on vs the name
Suffyseth that we haue the fame
I graunt quod she by my trouthe
Nowe Eolus thy trumpe of golde quod he
And blowe as they haue asked me
That euery man wene hem at ese
Though they go ful bad be ese
This Eolus gan it so blowe
That through the world it was yknowe
Tho came the seuenth route anone
And fyl on knees euerychone
And sayd, lady graunt vs soone
The same thynge, the same boone
That this next folke haue done
Fye on you quod she euerychone
Ye masty swyne, ye vyle wretches
Ful of rotten slowe tetches
What false theues, where ye wolde
Ben famed good, and nothyng nolde
Deserue why, ne neuer thought
Ben rather you to hange nought
For ye be lyke the slepyr cat
That wolde haue fyshe: but wost thou what?
He wol nothynge were hys clawes
Tyl thrifte come to your sawes
And on myne yt I it graunt
Or do fauour you to auaunt
Thou Eolus, thou kynge of Trace
Go blowe thus folke a foxy grace
Quod she anone, and wost thou howe
As I shal ye the ryght nowe
Sayn these ben they that wolde honour
Haue, and do no kyns labour
Ne to no good, and yet haue laude
And that men wende that selle I laude
For rowde hem not of loue werne
And yet the that gyrne at querne
As al to good to eate het brede
This Eolus anone vp sterte
And with hys blacke clarioun
He gan to blasen out a soun
As loude as brenneth wylde fyr
And eke therwith for to stire
This fourme was so ful of tapes
As ouer moyses arrere apes
And that went al the worlde aboute
That euery wight gan of hem route
And for to laugh as they were wode
Suche game found he them in hode
Tho came another route apayne
That babbel thoze the treuthe sayne
The harme and great vnthryfte
That any lyuynge creature
And prayd her to haue good fame
And that he nolde do hem no shame
But grue hem loos and good renoun
And be a blysse in euerytoun
Nay hold quod she a litel a lyte
Al be here in ye notabylyte
Why I nolle do hem none
Lette hym I nyl graunt it hym
Tho came there a lyuynge in route
And gan clappen al aboute
Euery man vpon the crowne
That al the hal gan to sowne
And sayd, lady lefe and dere
We ben suche folkes as ye may here
Cotel al the tale aryght
We ben here ores euery wyght
And haue be yre in wyche bocle
As good folke haue in goodnesse

And

And foye to ben knowen shrewes
And ful vyce and wicked thewes
Wherfore we pray you on a rowe
That our fame be suche yknowe
In al thinges ryght as it is
I graunte it you, quod the ywis
But what arte thou that sayest this tale
That wearest on thy hose a pale
And on thy crypper suche a bel
Madame, quod he, forthe to tel
I am that ylke shrewe ywis
That brent the temple of Isidis
In Athenes, lothat cyte
And wherfore dydest thou so, quod she
By my trouthe, quod he, madame
I wolde fayne have had a name
As other folke had in that toune
Although they were of great renowne
For her vertue and her thewes
Thought I, as great fame have shrewes
(Though it be nought) for their dwelle
As good folke have for goodnelle
And forthon I may not have that one
That other wol I not forgone
As for to gre a fame here
The temple fette I al on fyre
I trowe done our loos be blowe fowrthe
Ascondy be thou cure blythe
Abide, quod she thou Colins
Herest thou not what they prayen us
Madame yes ful wel, quod he
And I myldely answerde pardè
And strake his blacke crumpe talle
And gan to puffen and to blalle
That wel at the worldes ende
Myght that I gan aboute wende
Yet me thought ful goodly to me spake
And sayd, frende what is thy name
And thou come hyder to have fame
Parfay fayre frende, quod I
I come nat hyder certaynly
For such caute be my heed
Nedyrthe me, as I were deed
That no wyght have my name in honde
I wot my self best how I stonde
For nothyng to me is more swete
Than I have, or what I thynke
I holde my self al it dayntie
Certayne for the more parte
As forforth as I remembre arte
What dost thou here than, quod he
Quod I, That wol I the telle
The cause why I stande here
Some newe tydynges for to lere

Some newe thynge I not what
Tydynges eyther this or that
Of loue, or suche thynges glade
For certaynly he that me made
To come hyder, sayd to me
I shulde bothe here and se
In this place wonder thynges
But these be no suche tydynges
As I ment of: No quod he
And I answerde, no parde
For wel I wote euer yet
Syr the that fyrste I had wyt
That some folke han defyred fame
Diuerfly, and loos and name
But certaynly I nyl howle
Me where that fame dwelleth or howe
Me eke of her disposycion
Me also her condycion
Me the order of her dome
Ywys I not yet I hyder come
Wel than be to these tydynges
That thou nowe hyther bringes
That thou hafte herde quod he to me
But nowe no force, for wel I se
What thou desyrest for to lere
Come forth and stande no lenger here
And I wote the wythout drede
Into suche another place lede
Where thou shalte here many one
The gan I forthe to have gone
Out of the castel forthe to fare
The fayre I stande in a valey
Under the castel faste by
Ne hous that domus Dedaly
That Labyrinthus cleped is
Was made to wonderly ywis
Ne halfe so queyntly ythought
And certayne as I sayde nought
This queynte house aboute went
That never mo it stynt ne stent
And there came out so great a noyse
That had it stonde upon Oyse
Yet myght have ben herde ful eafily
Ful lyke, I trowe fykerly
And the noyse whiche that I herde
For al the worlde ryght so it ferde
As doth the rourynge of the stone
That from the gyn is fallen done
And al this house of whiche I rede
Was made of twygges falowe rede
And grene eke, and some were whyte
Suche as men to the cages fwyte
Or make of these panyers
Or elles hurches or dolfers

That

That for the swough and for the swygges
Thys house was also ful of grygges
And also ful eke of chyrkynges
And of many other worthynges
And eke thys house hath of entrees
As many as leues ben on trees
In sómer whan they bene grene
And on the rofe yet men may sene
A thousande holes, and wel mo
To letten the sowne out go
And by day in euery tyde
Ben al the doores open wyde
And by nyght eche one vnshette
Ne porte is there none to lette
No maner tydynges in to pace
Ne neuer rest is in that place
That it nys fylled ful of tydynges
Eyther loude or of whyspervnges
And euer al the houses angles
Is ful of rownynges and of iangles
Of werres, of peace, of maryages
Of restes, and of labour of byages
Of abode of derthe, and of lyfe
Of loue, of hate, accorde, of stryfe
Of losse, of lore, and of wynnynges
Of heale, of sickenesse, or of lesynges
Of fayre wether, and eke of tempestes
Of qualme of folke, and of bestes
Of dyuers transmutacyons
Of estates, and eke of regyons
Of trust, of drede, of ialousy
Of wyrthe, of wynnyng, of foly
Of plenty, and of great famyne
Of chepe, of derthe, and of ruyne
Of good or mysgouernment
Of fyre, and of dyuers accydent
And lo, this house of whiche I wryte
Eyther be ye it nas not lyte
For it was fyftie myle of length
Al was the tymber of no strength
Yet it is founded to endure
Whyle that it lyste to Auenture
That is the mother of tydynges
As the see of welles and sprynges
And it was shapen lyke a cage
Certes (quod I) in al myne age
Ne sawe I suche an house as this
And as I wondred me ywis
Upon this house, tho ware was I
Howe myne Egle faste by
Was perched hye vpon a stone
And I gan streyght to hym gone
And sayd thus, I pray the
That thou a whyle abyde me
For goddes loue, and let me sene
What wonders in that place bene
For yet peraunter I may lere
Some good therin, or somwhat here
That lefe me were, or that I went
Peter, that is nowe myne entent
(Quod he to me) therfore I dwel
But certayne one thynge I the tel
That but I bring the therin
Ne shal thou neuer comme the gyn
To come in to it, out of doute
So faste it whyrleth lo aboute
But sythe that Ioues of hys grace
As I haue sayd, wyl the solace
Fynally with these thynges
Vncouthe syghtes and tydynges
To passe with thyne heurnesse
Suche routhe hath he of thy distresse
That thou suffredest debonairly
And woste thy seluen vtterly
Desperate of al blysse
Sythe that fortune hath made a mysse
The swote of al thyne hertes rest
Languysshe, and eke in poynte to brest
But he through his mighte mercyte
Wyl do the ease, al be it lyte
And gane in expresse commaundement
To whyche I am obedyent
To forther the with al my myght
And wyshe and teche the aryght
Where thou mayste most tydinges here
Thou shalte here many one lere
With thys worde he tyght anone
Hent me vp betwene hys tone
And at a wyndowe in me brought
That in this house was, as me thought
And there withal me thought it stent
And nothynge it aboute went
And me set in the floore adoun
But suche a great congregacyoun
Of folke, as I sawe come aboute
Some within and some without
Nas neuer seue, ne shal be efte
That certes in this worlde mis lefte
So many formed by nature
Ne deed so many a creature
That wel vnneth in that place
Had I a foote brede of space
And euery wight that I sawe there
Rowned euerych in others ere
A newe tydynge priuely
Or els he tolde it al openly
Right thus, and sayd: Hast nat thou

That

That is betydde, lo ryght nowe
No quod he tel me what
And than he tolde hym this and that
And swore therto, that it was sothe
Thus hath he sayd, and thus he dothe
And thys shal be, and thus herde I say
That shal be founde, that dare I lay
That al the folke that is on lyue
Ne haue the konnynge to dyscryue
The thynges that I herde there
What a loude, and what in eere
But al the wonder moste was this
Whan one had herde a thynge ywis
He came streyght to another wyght
And gan hym tellen anone ryght
The same that hym was tolde
Or it a forlonge way was olde
And gan somwhat for to eche
To this tydyng in hys speche
More than euer it spoken was
And nat so sone departed nas
Tho fro hym that he me mette
With the thrydde, and er he lette
Any stounde, he tolde hym alse
Were the tidynges sothe or false
Yet wolde he tel it natheles
And euer more with mo encrees
Than it was erst: thus northe and sothe
Went euery tydyng, fro mouth to mouthe
And that encreasynge euermo
As fyre is wont to quicken and go
From a sparcle sprongen amis
Tyl al a cyte brent vp is
And whan that was ful vp spronge
And waren more on euery tonge
Than euer it was, and went anone
Vp to a wyndowe out to gone
Or but it might out there passe
It gan out crepe at some crenasse
And flewe forthe fast for the nones
And somtyme I salwe there at ones
Healyng, and a sadde sothe sawe
That gonnen of auenture drawe
Out at a wyndowe for to pace
And whan they metten in that place
They were achecked bothe two
And neither of hem myght out go
For eche other they gonne so croude
Tyl eche of hem gan cryen loude
Let me gone first, nay but let me
And here I wol ensuren the
With nones that thou wolt do so
That I shal neuer fro the go
But be thyn owne swore brother
We wol meddle vs eche in other
That no man be he neuer so wrothe
Shal haue one two, but bothe
At ones, al besyde hys leue
Come we a morowe or on eue
Lo we crye or fyl vpon vs
Thus saue I saile and sothe compowned
Togyder fyue for o tydynge
Thus out at holes gonne swarge
Euery tydyng streyght to fame
And he gan yeue eche hys name
After her dyspoticion
And yeue hem eke duracion
Some to were and wane soone
As doth e the fame whyle Boone
And let hem gonne, there might I seen
Wynged wonders fast flyen
Twenty thousande in a route
As Solus hem blewe aboute
And lorde this house in al tymes
Was ful of fyrmen and pylgrymes
With scrippes bretful of lesynges
Entermelled with tydynges
And eke alone by hem selue
O many thousande tymes tuelue
Saw I eke of these pardoners
Currours, and eke messangers
With bores crouned ful of lyes
As euer vessel was with wyn ful
And as I al ther tassell went
Thoute, and dyd al myne entent
Me for to playen and for to lere
And eke a tydyng for to here
That I had herde of some countre
That shal not nowe be tolde for me
For it no nede is redily
Folke can synge it bet than I
For al mote out late or rathe
Al theues in the rathe
I herde a great noyse withal
In a corner of the hal
There men of loue tydynges tolde
And I gan thyderwarde beholde
For I sawe rennynge euery wyght
As faste as that they haddon myght
And euery che cryde, what thynge is that
And some sayd I not neuer what
And whan they were al on an heep
Tho behynde gonne vp lepe
And clamben vp on other faste
And vp the noyse on hyghen caste
And treden fast on others heles

That

And

And stampe as men done after eles
At the laste I sawe a man
Whiche that I nought me can
But he semed for to be
A man of great auctorite
And there withal I abrayde
Out of my slepe halfe a fraydе
Remembrynge wel what I had sene
And howe hye and ferre I had bene
In my goost, and had great wonder
Of that the god of thonder
Had let me knowen, and began to write
Lyke as ye haue herde me endyte
Wherfore to study and rede alway
I purpose to do day by day
Thus in dreamynge and in game
Endeth this lytel boke of Fame.

Here folowyth the Testa-
ment of Loue.

The testament of Loue

Many men there ben, that with eeres openly spradd so much swalowen ydelnesse of festes and of ryme, by queynt knittynge colours, that of the goodnesse or of the badnesse of the sentence take they lytell hede or els nought.

Sothelye dulle wytte and a thoughtfull soule, so sore haue myned and grafted in my spyrytes, that suche craft of endityng wol nat ben of myne acquayntaūce. And for rude wordes and boystous peteren the herte of the herer to the inest point, and planten there the sentence of thynges, so that with lytel helpe it is able to spryng. This boke that nothyng hath of the great floode of wytte, ne of semelyche colours, is doluen with rude wordes and boystous, and so drawe togider to maken the eatthers therof be the more redy to hem sentence.

Some men there ben that paynten with colours ryche, and some with ores, as with red yuke, and some with coales and chalke: And yet is there good matter to the leude people of thilke chalkye purtreyture, as hem thynketh for the tyme, and afterwarde the syght of the better colours yeuen to hem more ioye for the first leudenesse. So sothly this leude clowdy occupation is not to praysе, but by the leude: for comenly leude leudenesse cōmendeth. Eke it shal yeue sight that other precious thinges shal be the more in reuerence. In latyn and frech hath many soueraine wittes had great delyte to endyte, and haue many noble thynges fulfylde, but certes there ben some þ speken their poysye matere in frenche, of whiche speche the frenche men haue as good a fantasye as we haue in herynge of frenche mennes englyshe. And many termes there ben in englyshe, whiche vnneth we englyshe men connen declare the knowlegynge: Howe shalde than a frenche man borne, suche termes comme iumpere in his mater, but as þ lay capitereth englyshe. Right so trewly the vnderstanding of englyshmen wol not stretche to the peynte termes in frenche, what so euer we boasten of straunge langage. Let than clerkes endyten in latyn, for they haue the propertie of science and the knowynge in that facultie: and lete frenchmen in their frenche also endyten their queynt termes, for it is kyndely to their mouthes, and let vs shewe our fantasyes in suche wordes as we learneden of our dames tonge. And although this boke be lytel thanke worthy for the leudnesse in trauayle, yet suche wrytynges eyther men forbiddeth that ben necessarye: for euery man therby may as by a perpetual mirrour seene the vyces or vertues of other, in whiche thyng lightly may be conceyued to eschewe perils, and necessarie to catch, after as auentures haue fallen to other people or persōs. Certes þ soueraynst thynge of beste and most creature reasonable, haue or els shulde haue ful appetyte to their perfection: vnreasonable beestes knowen not, for the reason hathin hem no worthynge: Than reasonable that wol not, is comparysoned to vnreasonable, and made lyke hem. For sothe the most soueraine and fynall perfection of man is in knowynge of a sothe, wythouten any error deceyuable, and in loue of our very god, that is vnchaungeable, that is to knowe and loue hys creature. ¶ Howe principally the meane to bringe in knowlegyng and louyng hys creatour, is the consideracion of thynges made by the creatour, wherthrough he thilke thinges that ben made vnderstanding here to our wyttes, arne the vnseene priuetes of god

max

made to vs lightful and knowyng, in our cō-
templacion & vnderstōdyng. These thynges
than forsoth moch bringen vs to ỳ ful know
legynge sothe, and to the parfyte loue of the
maker of heuenly thynges. Lo Dauid sayth:
thou hast delyted me in makynge, as who
sayth, to haue delite in ỳ tune how god hath
sent me in consideracyon of thy makynge.
Wherof Aristotle in the boke de Animalibus,
saith to naturel phylosophers: It is a greate
lykyng in loue of knowynge they creatoure:
and also in knowynge of causes in kyndely
thiges cōsidred. Forsoth the formes of kynd-
ly thynges and the shap, a great kindely loue
me shulde haue to the werkman ỳ hem made.
The crafte of a werkeman is shewed in the
werke. Therfore truly the phylosophers with
alyuely studye manye noble thinges, tyghte
precious and worthy to memory writen, & by
a great swetande trauayle to vs left en of cau
ses the properties in natures of thinges. To
whyche therfore phylosophers it was more
ioy, more lykynge, more herty lust in kyndely
vertues and matters of reason the perfectiō
by busy studye to knowe, than to haue had all
the treasour, al the richesse, al ỳ vayneglory ỳ
the passed Emperours, Princes, or Kynges
hadde. Therfore the names of hem in ỳ boke
of perpetuall memorye in vertue & peace am
myxten, and in the contrarye, that is to sayn,
in fyre the foule pyte of helle am thike pre-
sed that suche goodnesse hated. And bycause
this boke shal be of loue, and the prime cau-
ses of werynge in that dōynge with passyons
and dyseases for wantynge of desyre, I will
that this boke be cleped ỳ Testament of loue.
But now thou reder, who is thy like that wil
not in scorne laughe, to here a dwarfe or els
halfe a man, say he wil rende out the swerde
of hercules handes, & also he shulde set her-
cules gades a mile yet ferther, and ouer that
he had power of strength to pul vp the spere,
that Alisander ỳ noble might neuer wagge.
And that passyng al thinge to ben mayster
of Fraunce by myght, there as the noble gra-
cyous Edwarde the thyrde for al hys great
prowesse in victories ne myst all yet cōquere.
Certes I wote wel, ther shal be made more
scorne & iape of me, that I so vnwarely clo
the d al togyther in the cloudy cloude of vn-
cōnynge wyll putten me in prees to speke of
loue, or els of the causes in that matter, ỳ the
al ỳ grettest clerkes han had ynough to don,
and as who sayth gathered vp clene tofore
hem, and with ther sharpe sithes of conning
al mowen and made therof greate rekes and
noble, ful of al plentyes to fede me and many
another. Nuyse forsothe cōmen deth nought
his reason, that he hath in hate, be it neuer so
trusty. And al though these noble repers, as
good workemen and worthy ther hyre, han
al drawe and bounde vp in ỳ shues, & made
many shockes, yet haue I ensample to gader
the smale crōmes, and fullen my valet of tho
that fallen from the borde amonge the smale
hounde, not withstandynge the trauayle of
the almorgure, that hath drawe vp in ỳ clothe
al the remy sayles as stenchours, and the ri-
ches to bere to the almesse. Yet also haue I lo-
ue of the noble husbande sorre, al though I
be a straunger of conynge to lerne after his
doctrine, and these great workmen, and thre
my handfuls of the shedynge after them han
des, & if me fayle ought of my full to encrese
my porcion with that I shal drawe by lyt-
tes out of shockes, & ỳ seruaunte in tres
owne helpe is often moch auayled, besy-
yng of trouth in causes of thinges, was neuer
hardyer in the first fethers, and so sayth Ari-
stotle, & lyghter in vs that ben folowers of es-
For ther passyng studye han fresshed ther
tes, and ouer vnderstandynge han ren
consideracion of trouth by sharpnes of
reasons. Utterly these thinges be no
ne tapes, to throwe to hogges
meate for children of trouth,
berden wh a I pilgrymage
in wynter, whan the werther
sure was boysterous, & the
Horas as his kind asketh
euge coldes, maked the wawes
of ỳ ocean see so to arysse
kyndely ouer the
mune bankes that
it was in
peryl
to spyll all for ertbe.

¶ Thus endeth the prologue, and
here after folowyth the first
boke of the Testament
of Loue.

Alas fortune alas, I yͤ some tyme in delycyous houres was wont to enioy blyssful houndes, am nowe dryue by vnhappy heuynesse to bewaile my sondrye yuels in tene.

Trewlyé I knowe, in myn herte is writte of perdurable letters all the entencyons of lamẽtacion I nowe yen ymprynted, for any maner disease outwarde in sobbyng maner, shewyth sorowful yernyge frõ within. Thus frõ my cõfort I gruine to spille, syth she that shulde me solace, is ferre fro my presence. Certes her absence is to me an hell, my seruyng deth thus mwoll my neth, that endelesse care is throughout myne herte clenched, blysse of my ioye, that ofte me murthed is turned into galle, to thynke on thyng that may not at my will in armes me bere. Mirth is changed in to tene, whan swynke is there conuynually, that rest was wont to socourne and haue dwellynge place. Thus wrecche thoughtful, frõ gladde lokynge, I endure my penaunce in this derke prysone, enuyned fro frendshippe and acquaintaunce, and forsaken of al that any word dare speke. Straunge hath he ben of entrecourse made this home, where me shulde be, yf traisen were herd as he should. Neuer yͤ lasse yet berely lady precious Margaryte, haue in mynde on thy seruaunt, and thynke on his disease, how lightly he maye fynde the bromes ouergrowe in toure of thy remembraunce, that wolde make a cloude atwene vs, but not suffre my thoughtes of the to be enlumined. Thynke that one berrue of a Margarite precious is amonges many other the sorouful to cõforte yet well of that one sorouful to comforte is my lyfe to haue nought els at this tyme, bede me derke, ne no maner trauayle hath no power in me herte me the to fele, as shulde be here of a thynche lynge in your disease. Ah, God forbede that, but yet lette me bey, let me serue without any measure of penaunce, rather than myne herte ely thinking comforte in ought were bereued. What may my seruice auayle in absence of her, that my seruice shuld accepte is this nat endelesse sorowe to thynke? Yes, yes god wote, myne herte breaketh myghty a sonder howe shuld the groũd without kyndly nourriture bringen forthe any fruites? howe shulde a shippe withouten a sterne in the gret sea be gouerned? Howe shulde I wythouten my blysse, my herte, my desyre, my ioye, my goodnesse, endure in this contrarious prysone, that thynke euery hour in the day an hundred winter? Wel may nowe Eue sayne to me Adam, in sorowe fallen from welth, driuen arte thou out of paradise, with swcate thy sustenaũce to be swynke. Depe in thys pynynge pytte with two I lygge yllocked, with chaynes lynked of care, & of tene. It is so bye from thens I lye and the cõmune erth, there ne is cable ne no lande maked, that myght stretche to me to drawe me in to blysse, ne leuers to fley on is none, so that without recouer endeles here to endure I wotte wel I purueyde. O, where arte thou now frendshippe, that sometyme with laughande chere, madest bothe face and countenaũce to me wardes? truely now arte thou went out of towne, but euer me thynketh the vncareth his olde clothes, & that yͤ soule in yͤ bodye the lyfe of frendshippe was in is bodyen out from his other partues. Howe than farewel frendshyp, and farewel felawes, me thynketh ye al han taken your leaue me for to of you al at ones. But lady of loue ye wote what I mene yet thynke on the seruaunt that for the loue spylleth, all thinges haue I for sake to folowen them hefore me to a thought, though ye be vnaunbered. Remembraunce of loue lyche so fore vnder my brest, that other thought cometh not in my minde, but gladnesse to thynke on youre goodnesse and your mery chere, tembres and fayre to thynke on youre wirshe and youre daunger, from whiche I shulde me fare. Why great ioye it is to haue in meditacions the bowres, the herbers, the noyles in you payntes felawe and bell comen at ones, to suppose that I be bereued. Thus with care, sorowe, and rechan I shape myn rude wit yerth to make, how good goodly thynke on thys. O wretched foole that I am fallen in to so to loue, & bene of my brennyng tene hath me al defaced, how shulde ye lady ferre pyte on so foule fylthe? My cõmynge is thynne, my hoyre is exiled, sythe to a foole nature I am I compayrisoned. O truely lady but your mercy the more were, I wote wel al my labour were in vayne, your mercy than passeth right. God graunte that propyrcyente be verified in me, so that by truste of good hope, I may come to the haue of ease, and sythe it is impossible, the co-

lours of your qualyties to chaunge: and for sothe I wote wel wemmeles spotte may not abyde, there so noble bertue habounderh, so that the defasyng to you is verily vinagrinable, as countenaunce of goodnesse with encre syng bertue, is so in you knytte to abyde by necessary maner, yet if the eyuers myght fall, which is ayenst kynde, I wol wel myn here ne thulde therefore naughte flytte by the lesse poynt of gemetrye, so fadly is it fonded, that away from your seruyce in loue maye he not departe. O loue, whan shall I bene pleased? O charite, whan shal I bene eased? O good goodly, whan shall the dyce turne? O full of bertue do the chaunce of comforte bpwarde to fal. O loue, whan wolt thou thinke on thy seruaunt? I can no more but here out cast of al welfare, abyde the base of my bethe, or els tose the fyght that myght al my welfyng fo rowes boyde, and of the flod make an ebbe. These diseases mowen well by dure se of fortune, make my lyfe to vnbodye, and so for to dye: but certes ye lady in a full perfection of loue ben so knytte wyth my soule, that deth may not thilk knotte vnbynde ne departe, so that ye and my soule togyther is endelesse, in blysse thulde dwel, and there shal my soule at the full ben eased, that he may have your pre sence to thelue tymes of his desyres. Ah bere god, that shalbe a great ioye. O ye erthely goddesse take regarde of thy seruaunt, though I be feble, for thou arte woont to pitie the better, that wold comme seruen in loue, al be be full meker than kynges or princes, that wol not have that bertue in mynde. O loue pi sens, that gaste, that with thy noble bertue hast bynomen me wyt to loue fytle, me wemmage therof to have blynde, as galle s alose are so much stronge, that fauour of swetnes mave I not araste. Alas that your benigne eyen, in whiche that merry semethe to have al his nou ture, nyl by no wayes rawne the clemencie of mercy to me wardes. Alas that youre bren nande bertues, thy nouge amendes all false, and enluminynge al other people by habun daunce of encreatie, the wetch to me but tinesse and no light. O hele, thinges to thinke in myn hert maketh every day wepyng in myn eyen to renne. O hele lyggen on my bachele sore, that importable burthen me semeth on me back to be charged, it maketh me backward to meue, what all my steppes by comune course euen for the pretende. O hele thynges also on right side and lyft, have me so enuolued with care, that no hope of helpe is throughout me ronne, tremlyse and leue that graceles is my fortune, which that euer sheweth fr me wardes by a cloudy disease, al redy to make fortunes of rene, and the bisful fyde halte stil a way warde, and wol it not suffre to me wardes to turne no force, yet wol I not be coquered.

O alas that your nobles so moche amonge all other creatures comended by so stronge streme by al maner bertues, but ther be wonderful, I not which that let me slode to come in to my soule, wherefore purely mercy with sorowe thorough sought, my self I come on youre goodnesse to have pite on thes ravisse, that in the mest degre of sorowe and disease is left, and without your goodly help from any helpe and recouery. O hele sorowes mare I not suffrene, but if my sorowes thulde be rolde and to you wardes fonded, although moche space is betwene me to same, yet me thinketh that by suche tokenynge wold be ayen disease gyuen ebbe. O my mistreth that the soule of my lauerdrous wepyng is right nowe flowe into your sistene, where ofter after mercy I grale, to which thing me lysten the lut none and save to rene, but with a pen nous there ye commaundement awoke, but as sorowe drasons wolde thulde of my sorowe to have to hele with parde pite I quere me re ple ye gaste is nolde be kynde amongs me al other bertues by qualites of comforte I comforte to me myght naught be rende, o mercy and pite of you alone, with thinges halse I gad me grale for his mere [illegible] ther, but your tyme ellmoste of redy sorowe for anguysse of disease, that al my [illegible] I was taught. I can not tel here, but sodde al my passyons and felynges sore I fel, as it semed by the ryme, and I deserve a mater of trede light in me al at ones, thought I sulde trace as selpe haue of an hermyte mot were my shyte, and wolde him never of hose hem disease for I trow it is wel knowe to many persones, that vnbetwble yf a man be in his countenaunce pensyue, a maner of terdenesse creepeth in his hert, not for harme, but of goodly fabrication mainly as men re ben that angels ben at rede of our saluacion in heuen. And parde there is, ne may no passyon of disease be, but it is to meane that angels ben adradde, nor by trendes of trede,

sythen they ben perfytely blyssed, as affectiō of wonderfulnesse & by seruyce of obedyence, such ferde also há these lourrs in presence of theyr lours, and subiectes afore me theyr souerayns: Right so with ferdenesse myn herte was caught. And I sodaynly aftonyed, there entred in to the place there I was lodged a lady, the semelych and moste goodly to my syght, that euer to forne apered to any creature, and trewly in the blustryng of her looke, she yaue gladnesse and comforte so dayncly to all my wyttes, and ryghte so she dothe to euery wyght that cometh in her presence. And for she was so goodlyke (as me thought) myne herte began semedele to be enbolded, and were a lytell hardy to speake, but yet with a quakynge voyce, as I durste, I salued her, and enquired what she was, and why she so worthye to syghte, dayned to entre in to so foule a dongeon, and namely a prison, wythout leaue of my kepers. For certes all thoughe the vertue of dedes of mercy stretchen to vysyten the poore prisoners, and hem after that facultes ben had to comfort, me semed that I was so ferre fallen into myserie and wretchednesse, that me thulde no preeyous thynge neyghe: and also that for my sorowe euery wyght thuld ben heavy, and wythe my recouery. But whan this lady had fully appercetued, as well by my wordes as by my chere, what thought befred me within, with a good womanly countenaunce she sayde these wordes.

O my nory, wenyst thou that my maner be, to forget my frendes or my seruauntes? nay (quod she) it is my full entente to vysyte and comforte all my frensshippes and alyes, as well in tyme of perturbation, as of moste prosperite of blysse, in me shall vnkyndnesse neuer be founden. And also sythen I haue so fewe especyall trewe now in these dayes, wherfore I maye well at more leyser come to hem that me deserueth, and yf my comynge maye in any thynge auayle, were wel I wol come often.

Nowe good lady (quod I) that art so fayre on to loke, tey myne honne by thy wordes, blysse of paradise arn thy lokynges, ioye and comforte are thy mouynges. What is thy name? howe is it that in you is so moche vertuous kynge vertues enpight, as me semeth, and in none other creature yt euer sawe I with myn eyen? Thy disciple (quod she) me wondreth of thy wordes and on the, yt for a lytel disease hast forgeten my name. Olde thou not well that I am Loue, that first the brought to thy seruyce? O good lady, qd I, is this worshippe to the or to thyn excellence for to come in to so foule a place? Parde somtyme tho I was in prosperite, and with forayne goodes enuolued, I had moryll to done to drawe the to myne hostel, & yet many wernynges thou madest er thou lyste fully to graunte, thyne home to make at my dwellynge place: & now thou comest goodlyke by thine owne vyse, to comforte me with wordes, and so there thorughe I gynne remembre on passed gladnesse. Trewly lady I ne wotte whether I shal say welcome or none, sythen thy comynge wol as moche do me tene and sorow, as gladnesse and myrthe: se why. For that me comforteth to thinke on passed gladnesse, that me anoyeth efte to be in dongne. Thus thy comynge both gladdeth and teneth, and that is cause of moche sorowe: Lo lady, howe than I am comforted by your cōmynge, and with that I gan in teres to bitterly, and tenderly wepe. Howe certes (quod Loue) I se wel, and that me ouerthynketh) that wyte in the fayleth and arte in poynte to dote.

Trewly (quod I) that haue ye maked, and that euer wol I true. Dotest thou not well (quod she) that euery shepherde ought by reson to seke hys sperkelande shepe that arne tonne in to wylderneste, amonge bustes and perils, and hem to theyr pasture ayen bryng, and take of hem prayy best cure on kepynge: and tho the vncomynge shepe scattred wold ben lofte, renuyng to wyldernesse, and to desertes drawe, or els wolden put hem selfe to the swalowing wolfe, yet shall ỳ shepeherde by busynesse and trauayle so put him forthe, that he shal not let hym be lofte by no waye. A good shepeherd putteth rather his lyfe to ben lofte for hys shepe. But for thou shalte not wene me beyng of worse condicion, trewly for euerych of my folke, and for al tho that to me warde be knyt in any condicyon, I wol rather dye than suffre hem through errour to ben spylte. For me lyste, and it me lyke, I, of al myn a shepherde be to be cleped. Wost thou not wel I fayled neuer wight, but he me refused, & wolde negligently go with vnkyndnesse: and yet parde haue I many such holpe and releued, and they haue ofte me begyled, but euer at the ende it bifeleth in their own

nedes.

neckes. Hastle thou not radde howe kynde I was to Paris, Priamus sone of Troy, howe Jason me failed for al his false beheste, howe Cesars sonke, I lette it for no tene tyl he was stoned in my bysse for his seruyce. What qd the moste of all, maked I not a loue daye bytwene god and mankynde, and chese a mayde to be nompere, to but the quarel at ende? Lo, howe I haue trauayled to haue thanke on al sydes, & yet lyst me not to rest, & I must fynde en home I shulde werche. But trewly myne owne disciple, bycause I haue the founde at al assayes in thy wyl to be redy myn hestes to haue folowed, & hast ben trewe to that Margaryte perle, that ones I the shewed, and the alwyse ayenwarde hath made but daungerous chere, I am come in proper perso to put the out of errours, and make the gladde by wayes of reson, so that sorowe ne disease shall no more herafter the amaistry. Wherthrough I hope thou shalt lyghtly come to the grace, that thou longe hast desyred, of thylke iewel. Hastle thou not herde many ensamples, howe I haue comforted & reuyled the scholers of my lore, who hathe worthyed kynges in the feld? & who hath honoured ladies in boure by a perpetuel myrrour of their truth in my seruice? & who hath caused worthy folke to voyde vice and shame? & who hath holde cytyes and realmes in prosperite? & the lyst cleape ayen thyn olde remembraunce, thou coudest euery poynte of this declare in especiall, and saye p I thy maystres haue be cause, causyng these thynges and many mo other. Nowe trwys madame quod I all these thinges I knowe well my selfe, and that thyn excellēce passeth the understandyng of vs beries, and that no mannes wytte erthly may compize hende thy vertues. Wel than quod she for I se the in disease and sorowe, I wot wel thou arte one of myne norses, I shaye not suffre the so to make sorowe, thyn owen selfe to shende: but I my selfe come to be thy lese, thanheur charge to make to seme the lesse, for wo is hym that is a lone: And to the sorye to ben moued by a sorowful wizt it is great gladnesse. Right so with my sycke frendes I am sycke, and wyth sory I can not els but sorowe make, til why I haue hem releued, in suche wise that gladnesse in a maner of counterpaysynge shall restore as moche in ioye as the passed heynesse byforne dyd in tene. And also qd she whan any of my seruauntes ben a lone in solytarye place, I haue yet euer beseyed me to be with hem, in comforte of their hertes, and taughte hem to make songes of playnte and of blysse, and to endyten letters of rethoryke in queynt vnderstondynges, & to bethinke hem in what wyse they might best their ladies in good seruyce plese, and also to lerne maner in countenaunce, in wordes, & in bearing, & to ben meke & lowly to euery wight, his name & fame to encrease, & to pene great refes & large, & his renome maye springen, but the thynges haue I excused for thy lose and thy great corages, wherthrough thou arte nedye, and nothynge to me vnknowen, but I hope it shall somtyme it shall ben amended, as this as I sayd. In noture haue I taught al myne in curtesye made hem expert their ladies hertes to wynne, and if any wolde ben proud or be enuyous, or of wretches acquaintaunce, hastely she haue suche vnkyndenesse of my scholers for all vices trewly I haue vertues and worthynesse in all my power I haue. O worthy creature quod I and by iuste cause the name of goddes dignite mowe beare. In the lyth the grace through whiche any creature in this world hath any goodnesse, trewly al maner of wysdome and counsaile in vertue out of the springen wellen, as brokes and rivers passe their springes, & lyke as all waters be drawen to the see, so al kyndely springes often by ful appetyte of delyte to drawe after thy steppes, and to thy prefece aproche, after their kyndely perfection. Now dere madame as in thys worlde aught to forfete aforne deuyne purueyaunce. Also ladye al the privy thoughtes, in hertes of creatures maye ben hydde from your knowing. Therfore I wote wel lady that ye knowe your self that I in my conscience am and haue ben lyege to your seruyce, al coude I neuer do as I shulde, yet so forthe fayned I neuer to loue otherwyse than was in myne herte and if I coude haue made chere to one, and thought another, as many other doone alday afore myn eyen, I trowe it wolde not me haue availed. Certes quod she I wolde not nowe haue the here yfeyned. Ye wete wel lady eke quod I that I haue not playde taker, nether in, docke out, and with p werthercocke waued, & trewely there ye me sette, by accorde of my conscience, I wold not lye, ryl ye and reason by ayerte strength ma-

den, myne herte to tourne. In good faythe (quod the) I haue knowe the euer of the condycions, and sythen thou woldest (in as much as in the was) a made me priuy of thy counsayle, and iuge of thy conscience, though I forsoke it in the dates, til I saw better my time, wolde neuer god that I shuld nowe fale, but euer I wol be redy wytnessynge thy soth, in what place that euer I shall, ayenst all tho ỹ wol the contrary sustayne: And for as moche as to me is naught vnknowen ne hyd of thy priuy hert, but al hast thou the thinges made to me open at the ful, that hath caused my comynge in to this prison to voide the webbes of thyne eyen, to make the clerely to se the errours thou hast ben in, and bycause that men ben of dyuers condycions, some a dradde to saye a sothe, and some for a sothe anone redy to fyghte, and also that I maye not my selfe ben in place to withsay thilke mē that of the spoken other wise than the sothe, I woll and I charge the in vertue of obedyence, ỹ thou to me owest, to wryten my wordes, and sette hem in writynges ỹ they mowe as my wytnessynge ben noted amonge the people. For bookes written neyther dreden ne shamen, ne flyng come, but onely shewen the entent of the writer, and yeue remembraunce to the herer and if any woll in thy presence saye anye thynge to the writers, loke boldely, truste on me Ars to answere at ỹ ful. For certes I shall him enfourme of all the trouthe in thy loue, with thy conscience, so that of his helpe thou shalte not barre at thy nede. I trowe the strōgest and the best that may be found, wol not transfers thy wordes, whereof than woldest eyon drede.

Gretly was I tho gladed of these wordes, & as it tho sauh were somdele lyght in hert, both for the auctorite of wytnes, and also for sykernesse of helpe of the forsayd beheste, and said. Tre wly lady nowe am I wel gladded through comfort of your wordes: be it nowe lykynge vnto youre nobley to shewe whiche folke diffame your seruauntes, for the your seruice ought aboue al other thinges to ben commended. Yes (quod the) I se wel thy soule is not al out of the amased cloude: the were better to here thyng that ỹ myght light out of thyn heuy charge, and after knowyng of thyne owne helpe, thā to stryte suche wordes, & such reasons to here: for in a thought-ful soule (and namely suche one as thou arte) woll not yet suche thynges synken. Come of therfore and let me sen thy heuy charge, that I may the lightlyer for thy comforte puruey.

Nowe certes lady, quod I, the moste comfort I myght haue, were bitterly to were me be sure in hertes of that Margaryte I serue, and so I thynke to don vp all mightes whyle my lyfe dureth. Than (qd the) mayste thou therafter, in suche wyse that myspleasaunce ne entre. In good fayth (quod I) there shal no mispleasaūce be caused throuz trespace on my syde. And I do the to wetten (quod she) I set neuer yet perfō to serue in no place (but yf he caused the cōtrari in defautes and trespaces) that he ne spedde of hys seruyce. Nyn owne erthly lady (quod I tho) and yet remembre to your worthynesse howe long sythen by many reuolutynge of yeres, in tyme whan October his leaue gynneth take, & Nouēbre sheweth hym to sight, whan bernes ben ful of goodes as is the nutte on euery halke, and than good londetyllers gynneth shape for the earth, vp great trauayle to bringe forth more corne to mannes sustenaunce, ayenste the nexte yeres folowyng. In suche tyme of plentye, he that hath an home, and is wyse, lyste not to wander metuayles to seche, but he be cōstrayned or excited: oft the lothe thyng is done by excitacion of other mannes opynyon, whyche wolden fayne haue myne abydynge, take in herte of luste to trauayle and se the windyng of the erthe in that tyme of wynter, by woodes that large stretes werne in, by smale pathes that fayne and hogges hadde made, as lanes with ladels their maste to seche, I walked thynkynge alone a wonder great while, and the great beestes that the woode haunte and adorneth all maner forestes, and heerdes gone to wylde: than er I was ware I neyghed to a fee banke, and for ferde of the beestes shyperafte I eryde: for lady I trowe ye were well your selfe nothyng is worse than ỹ beestes that shulden ben tame, yf they catche her wyldenesse and gynne againe ware ramage: thus for ferde was I a ferde, and to shyp me hyed. Than were there yno we to lache myne handes and drawe me to shyppe, of whyche many I knewe wel the names. Syght was the first, but was a nother, thoughte was the thirde, and wyl eke was there a maister: these broughten me within bord of this shyppe of traueyle. So whan the sayle was spradde and

thys

this shippe gan to moue, the wynde and water gan for to ryse, & ouerthwartly to tourne the welken, the wawes semeden as they kist togyder, but often vnder colour of kyssynge is mokyll olde hate pryuely closed and kepte. The storme so straungely and in a deuourynge maner gan so faste vs assayle, that I supposed the date of my deth shuld haue made there hys gynnynge, nowe vp nowe downe, nowe vnder the wawe and nowe aboue was my shyppe a great whyle. And so by mokel duresse of wethers & of stormes, and with great anowing pylgrimages I was dryuen to an yle, whet vtterly I wende fyrst to haue be reskowed, but trewly as the fyrst gynnyng, it semed me so perylous the hauen to catche, that but thorowe grace I had ben comforted, of lyfe I was ful dispayred. Trewly lady yf ye remembre a ryght of al maner thynges, your selfe came hastely to sene vs see dryuen, and to weten what we weren: but fyrst ye were deynous of chere, after which ye gonne better alyght, & euer as me thought ye lyued in great drede of disease, it semed so by your chere. And whan I was certified of youre name, the lenger I loked in you, the more I you goodlyer dradde, and euer myn hert on you opened the more, and so in a lytell tyme my shyppe was out of mynde. But lady as ye me lad I was ware bothe of beestes and of fyshes a great nombre thronging to gyder: amonge whiche a muskel in a blewe shel had enclosed a Margarite perle, the moste precious and best that euer to forne came in my sight, and ye tolden your self that ylke iewel in hys kynde was so good and so vertuous, that her better shulde I neuer fynde, all sought I therafter to the worldes ende, & with that I held my peace a great whyle: and euer sythen I haue me bethought on the man that sought the precious Margarites, and whan he had founden one to his lyking, he solde al his good to bye that iewel: I wis thought I and yet so I thynke, nowe haue I founden the iewell, that myne hert desyreth, whertо shulde I seche further, trewly nowe wol I flyte, and on this Margarite I sette me for euer. Nowe than also sythen I wylle wel it was youre wyl that I shulde so suche a seruyce me take, and so to be syze ỹ thynge, of whiche I neuer haue blysse, there lyueth nowe, but he hathe disease: veur might thau that brought me to such seruyce, that to me is cause of sorowe and of ioye, I wōder of your word that ye sayn, to bringen men in to ioy, and parde ye wote wel that defaute ne trespace may not resonable ben put to me wardes, as ferre as my conscience knoweth: But of my disease me lyst now a whyle to speke, & to informe you in what maner of blysse ye haue me throng. For trewly I wene that al gladnesse, al ioye, and al myrthe is bechet vnder locke, and the key throwe in suche place that it may not be founde: myn brenning who hath altred al my hewe & than I shulde slepe, I walowe & I thinke, and me dispose. Thus combred, I seme that al folke had me mased. Also lady myne, desyre hath longe dured, some speking to haue, other at yleft haue ben enmoysed with syght: and for warnynge of these thinges, my mouth wolde & be dum, pleyne right sore, sythen ruels for my goodnesse arne manyfolde to me holden. I vnder lady truely, saue euermore your [illegible] howe ye mowe for shame such [illegible] on your seruaunt to be so multiplied [illegible] fore knelyng with a lowe bert I pray [illegible] rue on this cayttfe, that of nothing [illegible] serue. Good lady if you list nowe your [illegible] to me shewe, that am of your priuey [illegible] tes at al assayes in this time, and vnder [illegible] wynges of protectiō. [illegible] is shapen, howe shal than straungers [illegible] wyse after succour looke, whan I that [illegible] priuy, yet of helpe I do fayle. [illegible] I not, but thus in thys prison [illegible] bondes and chaynes me holde. Lady [illegible] your selfe. A remnant to wrecke [illegible] the care. But thus sighing and lamenting [illegible] wayle here alone, and nere it for comforte [illegible] your presence, right here wolde I [illegible] yet a lytel am I gladded, that [illegible] grace and none hap haue I here [illegible] to finde the precious Margarite, that al other [illegible] left men shulde bye, if they shulde therfore [illegible] al her substaunce. Algis me that [illegible] games and purpose sickers ben maked [illegible] ters, suche prisoners as I am euermore [illegible] ner loke and to hyngre, and for suche [illegible] it is harde any such iewell to wynne. Is this lady an honour to thy deyte, me thynketh by right, suche people shulde haue no mayster, ne ben ouerlokers ouer none of thy seruauntes. Trewly were it ieful vnto you, to all the goddes wolde I playne, that ye rule your dewme purueyaunce amonges your seruauntes nothynge as ye shulde. Also lady my moeble

es insuffysaunt to coũteruayle ꝑ price of thys iewel, or els to make thesche ꝑsones no wight is worthy suche perles to weare, but kynges or ꝑsones, or els their peers: this iewel for her true worde adorne & make fayre al a realme, ꝑ nobley of vertue is so muche ꝑ her goodnesse ouer al is cõmended. Who is it that wold not wayte but he might suche riches haue at hys wyl, the vertue therefour of this prison may me delyuer, & nought els. And if I be not ther thorow holpen, I se my selfe without recouery: although I might here voyde, yet wold I not, I wolde abyde the daye that destenye hath me ordeyned, which I suppose is without amendement, so sore is myne herte bounden, that I maye thynken none other. Thus frayle lady (quod she) Daunger laced me in lockes, I leue it be not your will: and for I se you taken so lyttel hede, as me thynketh, and wol not maken by youre myght the vertue in mercy of ꝑ Margaryte on me for to stretche, so as ye mowe wel, in cace that you lyste: my blysse and my myrthe arne feble, sickenesse & sorowe ben alwaye redy, the cope of teene is wounde aboute al my body, that stonding is me best, wherfor maye I lygge for pure mysease sorowe, and yet al this is ynough ne to be ꝑmeth sylver, in forwarde of this bargayne, for treble folde, so mokel muste I suffer, er ryme come of myne cace. For he is worthy no welthe, that mave no woe suffer. And certes I am leuy to thinke on these thinges, but who shal yeue me water ynough to drinke lest myn eyen drie for renning stremes of teares? Who shall wayten with me myne owne happy hevynesse? Who shal cõsayle me now in my lykynge teene, and in my goodly harse? I not. For euer ꝑ more I brenne, the more I coueyte: the more that I sorow, ꝑ more thrist I in gladnesse. Who shal than yeue me a contrarye vous drinke, to stanche the thrist of my blysful bytternesse? Lo thus I brenne and I drenche, I shyuer and sweate, to this reuerssed vsel was neuer yet ordeyned salue, for sorth al liches ben vncõming, saue the Margaryte alone, any suche remedy to purueye.

And with these wordes I braid out to wepe, that euery teare of myne eyen for greatnesse semed they boren out the bal of my sight, and that al the water hadde ben out ronne. Than thought me, that loue gan a litel to henge for mis comfort of my chere, and gan soberly and in easy maner speke, well auysinge what he sayde. Comenly the wyse speken easyly and softe for many skylles: One is, their wordes are the better beleued, and also in easy speakynge, auysement men maye catche, what to put forthe, and what to holden in. And also the auctorite of easye wordes is the more, & eke they yeuen the more understandynge to other intẽcion of the matter. Right so thys ladye easely and in a softe maner gan say these wordes. ¶ Verayly (quod she) great it is, that by no maner of semblaunt, as ferre as I can espye, thou lyst not to haue any recour, but euer thou playnest & sorowest, & wantes of remedye for foolyshe wylfulnesse the lyste not to seche: but enquire of thy next frendes, that is thyne inwytte, and me that haue ben thy maystresse and the recour and fyne of thy disease, for of disease is gladnesse and ioye, & ful besi so holden, that it quencheth the stynge of the sickle teenes. But thou that were wonte not onely these thynges remembred in thyne herte, but also tooles therof to enfourmen, in admonestynge of their errours, and distroyeng of their derke opynions, and in comfort of their feare thoughtes: now canst thou not ben comforte of thyn owne soule: in thynkynge of these thynges. O where hastu ben so longe cõmensal, that hast so mykel eaten of the potages of sorye ignorance, and dronken so of ignorance, that the olde soukyng which thou haddest of me, arne a maystred and lorn fro al maner of knowynge? O this is a worthy person to helpe other, that can not counsayle hym selfe. And with these wordes for pure and strong shame I wore al red. And she than seing me so astonyed by dyuers stoundes, sodaunly (whiche thynge kynde hateth) gan delectously me comfort with sugred wordes, putting me in ful hope that I shuld the Margarite gete, if I folowed her hestes, and gan with a fayre clothe to wypen the teares that hyngen on my chekes: and than sayd I in this wyse. Nowe wel of wysdome and of al welthe, without the may nothing ben lerned, thou beares the keyes of al priuy thinges. In bayne trauayle men to catche anye redshyp, but if ye lady first the locke vnshet, ye lady lerne vs the wais and the bypathes to heuen: ye lady make al the heuenly bodyes goodly and benignely to done her course, that gouernen vs beestes here on erthe. Ye armen your seruaunces ayenst al debates, with im-

perciable

perciable harneys, ye setten in her hertes insa perable blode of hardenesse, ye leaden hem to the parfyte good. Yet all thynge desireth, ye wern no man of helpe ỳ wele done your loze, graunt me nowe a lytel of your grace, al my sozowes to ceasse. Thyne owne seruaunt qõ he trewly thou sytteſt nye myne herte, & thy baddē chere gan sozely me greue: but amõge thy playnyng wordes me thought thou alle-gest thynges to be lettinge of thyne helpyng, and thy grace to hynder, wherthrought me thynketh that wãhope is crope through thyn herte: God forbyd that nyse rathnesse thought shulde come in thy mynde thy wittes to trou ble, sythen euery thyng in comming is contin gent, wherfore make no more thy propoſicõ by an impoſſible. But nowe I praye the re herse me ayen the thynges, that thy mistrust causeth, and thylke thinges I thynke by rea son to distroyen, & put ful hope in thyn herte what understandeſt thou there quod she by that thou saydeſt, many ler games are thyn ouerlokers. And also by that thy moeble is insufficiant, I not what thou therof meaneſt.

Trewly qõ I by the fyrst, I say that tan glers euermore arne spekynge rather of euyl than of good, for euery age of man rather en clyneth to wickednesse, than any goodnesse to auaunce. Also false wordes spryngen to wyde, by the sterynge of false lyeng tonges, that fame als swyftly flyeth to her eares, & say the many wicked tales, and as soone that false nesse ben leued as trouth, for al his gret sotil nesse. Nowe by that other qõ I me thynketh thilke iewel so precious, that to no such per sone as I am, wolde bertue therof entende, & also I am to feble in worldely toyes any such iewel to contreuayle. For suche people that worldly toyes han at her wyl, ben sette at the highesse degre, and most in reuerence ben ac cepted, for false wening maketh felicite ther in to be supposed: but such cayteues as I am euermore ben hyndred. Certes qõ she false good hede & I that by reason to the thewen, ỳ al these thynges inow nat let thy purpose, by the lesse poynt that any wight coude preche.

REmembreſt nat (quod the ensample is one of the strogest maner, as for to preue a mannes purpose. Thanne yf I nowe by ensample enduce the to any propoſycion is it nat proued by strength. Yes forsothe qõ I. Wel qõ she tadded thou neuer howe paris of Troye and Helayne loued togyder, and yet had they not entrecommuned of speche. Also Acrisius shette Dane his doughter in a tour, for sureste that no wyght shulde of her haue no maystry in my seruyce, and yet Jupiter by signes without any spech had al his purpose ayenst her fathers wyl. And many suche mo haue ben smitte in trouthe and yet spake they neuer togyder, for that is a thing enclosed un der secretnes of nature, whan two persõs en tremellen hertes after a syght. The power in knowyng of such thynges to preue, shal nat al tyme be reuen to vnbelles, for many thynges in such precious matters be referred to iugement of tyme, purueyance for alle lyuing people, by mannes consideracion can they not be determyned. Wherfore I sayde al the cry, al the langynge, that men people vpon my seruaunces maken eft, is rather can se of esplorte than of any hyndringe. But than qõ I suffre ye suche wrong, and can wham ye lyst, lightly al suche yuels asswa ge semeth to your is a great vnsaueryte. Then she holde nowe thy peace. I haue found many that han ben to me vnkynde and spite ly I wolle suffre euery wight in his ma ner dis ease, & who that contrarieth me wel and trewly, him wol I be gracious one of myne in to blysse to wende. As doyngin Grece. Who was strongest, but he that longest abode and continued in trauayle spared ỳat to trauayle as longe as he may. Suche thilke persons ỳ profer seruyce the tyme a while, & anon be shal redy to another, & so nowe one he shal newe another, and in to water entre and ne nor pelgreth, suche one lyst me nat seruyce bynde. I rede ye to diuers places wol ner by kynd endure ge forth to trauey. Lobe nowe I praye the myne elde seruaunces of tyme passed contin ued in her seruyce, & folowe thou after their steppes, and thanne myght thou nat faile. In case thou worche in this wyse. Certes qõ I it is nothing inch, this world to tyme passed, che this countrey hathe one maner, another countre hath another. And so may nat a man alway pure to his eye the falue, that he treated with his hele. For this is sothe, betwyxte two thynges lyche, otte deuersytes requred.

I graue qõ she thartes sothe dyuersyte of na cion, dyuersite of lawe, as was maked by ma

ny reasons,

ny reasons, for that dyuersite cometh in by ꝑ contrarryous malyce of wicked people, ꝑ ban enuyous herres ayenst other. But trewly my law to my seruauntes euer hath ben ingeneral, whiche maye not fayle, for right as mannes lawes, ꝑ is ordayned by manye determinatiõs, may not be know for good or badde, tyl assay of ꝑ people han proued it, & to what ende it draweth, & than it be wyth the neerste therof, or els the impossibylyte. Wyche so the lawe of my seruauntes so wel hath be proued in general, that hytherto hathe it not fayled.

Wyste thou not wel that al the lawe of kynde is my lawe, and by god ordayned and stablished to dure by kynde reason, wherefore al law by mannes wytte put vnryde, ought to be vnderputte to lawe of kynde, whiche yet hath be comune to euery sundry creature, that my statutes and my lawe that ben kyndely, arme general to al peoples. Olde bowges, and by many turninges of yeres bled, and with the peoples manet proued, nowen not so lightly be betaled, but newe bowges contrarraumters suche olde, often caulen debates and bra fornmany purpoles. Yet sant I nat therfore, that ayen newe mischefe, men shulde not ordayne a newe remedye, but alway looke it contrary not the olde, no further than the mayster ouerthroth. Than folowith it the olde bowges in loue han ben vnuersal, as for moste exployte for the ferste. Wherfore I wolde not yet that of my lawes nothynge be abrudged.

But thanne to the purpole suche tangelers and lookers, and maysters of games, ꝑ the thynke in ought ther mowe here, yet loue wel alwaye, and serue hem at nought, and lette the poste ben lowe in euery mygters parlor, and rebuke in thyne herte to mayntene that thou hast begonne, and auyse the fayne with meke meste in woides, and thus with fyght shalte thou surmounte and bequace the vyce in their herres. And wisdome yet is to some tyme otherwhyle there a manne wol fyght. Thus with suche thynges, the tonges of yuel shall ben stylled: els fully to graunte thy ful inquynge, forsothe euer was and euer it shal be, that myne enemies ben a rebe to truste to any fightinge: and therfore have thou no colardes herte in my seruyce, no more thanne some tyme thou habbest in the contrary, for if thou drede so the tangles thy vyage to make: vnderstande wel that he that breketh any tayne to sowe his corne, he shal haue thyn herne.

also he ꝑ is a ferde of his clothes, let hi daũce naked. And no nothing vndertaketh, namelyt in my seruyce, nothyng achieueth. After great stormes ꝑ wether is often mery & sun oth. After moch clatering there is mokyl rowning: thus after tangling wordes cometh buysshe, peace, & be styl. O good lady quod I than se nowe howe seuen yere passed & more, haue I graffed and groubed a vyne, and with al the wayes that I coude I sought to a fede me of the grape, but frutte haue I non founde. Also I haue this seuē yere serued Labā to a wedded Rachel his doughter, but blere eyed Lia is brought to my bedde, whiche alway engendreth myne, and is full of childrē in tribulacion & in care: and although the clippinges and kyssynges of Rachell shulde semen me swete, yet is she so barayne, that gladnesse ne ioye by no way wol springe, so that I may hope with Rachel, I may not ben comforted with solace, wherein ther of myn herte ys lefte is fayled. Nowe than I pray that semeth me fredom & grace, in this ryght yere, that ryghteth mowe to me bothe by kynred and maryedar after their frut with the dayes of trauayle to folow the thriften lanes & what euere he dis, that thilke Pargatorie be holden fast by in your privy chambre, that he in this cas to none other person be counseyled. Loke than ꝑ thou be in this cas to none other person counseyled. Loke than ab be thou perfourmed in my seruice, in whiche, I haue the grouded, that thylke house with myne enemies mowe ne by my person be not forbidde for this may be gan to thryue, but for this foundemēt is bad to the ende maye he it not bringe. For mekenesse & coumsaunce, with a manly herte in dedes, & in longe continuaunce, is the countenance of my seruice, to al my seruise belyeerth. Now be ryght than ꝑ me list all auaunce suche persons as louen the ful stringes at ferdes, the bygest dales in churches & in hal, louynges of people in marketes and fayres, bustebasses by be in our place any whyle together, wenyng his dyne wol more excellent than other, forsaking al maner beutie but his owne: May not god not, there shal nothig passe of my wyl. Truly my maner here to forne hath ben, wel ꝑ with my bryde, I yons in the frise, and lambes in chambre. Egles at alsaure, & mayden in halle, foxes in countarie, thrill in their bedes, & their protection is graunted rebyo to be a bridge, ꝑ their bauer is areted like wolues

the

the felde. Thus by these wayes shal men ben manured: enlample of Dauid ỳ from keping of shepe, was drawen vp into the order of kingly gouernaunce, and Iupiter from a bole to ben Europes fere, and Iulius Cesar from the lowest degre in Rome, to be maister of al erthly prices, and Creas from bet, to be kyng of the coumre there Rome is nowe stonding. And soto the I say, thy grace by being ther after, may set the in suche plight, that no tongling may greue the left tucke of thy tirmes, that are there tanghes, is nought to counte or a creste in thy disauauntage.

Other (quod he) hathe the people in this worlde deserued to haue had great name of worthinesse, a harde soule to bete any shame, and that is one of the obiections thou alegest to be aven thru heresy deserue. Perfor sothe (quod I) and thou to comenly the people shal lye, a bringe aboute suche enlame, from c (od be it) men shal leafmers put on the enlame, wemed thy selfe thereby ben empeyred that wening is stronge, se why for as moche as they fren thy merite encreaseth, and make the ben more lowdly to ben that knowe of ỳ the seth, be what thing thou art apeyred, with (quod thou) are encreaseth of thy beloued frendes: and soothe a wonder of thy frendes to the lasse hause, se it, and better than a false kelinge to deserviable gledinge of ben me ner, aboue ỳ at thou to be beloued fren shoud marth suche enlame, grace thou art encrea sed and not apeyred. Lady (quod I) fortune wil a man be in delate, the dimination of the common people be likely nothing to deserues of men, ne to the merites of their desyres, but only to the auenture of fortune, and not after the vertuous diserue? And some de ben the delonary with bis here, and ther after reseth the iugement not taking he de to trafon me to the qualyte of ỳ dessa, as thus If a man be ryche and fulfylde with worldly welthinesse, some commendeth it, and saye it is for me by suche cause and he that hath ad uersyte ther saye he is weaned, and hath de serued thyche anoye. The contrarye of these thynges some men holden also, and saye that to the ryche prosperite is purnayed in to his confusion, and vpon this matter, many au cteures of many and grete witted clerkes they alegen. And some men saye, though al good effymacion forsake folke that han aduersyte yet is it merite and encrease of hys blysse, so that these purposes arne so wonderful in vn derstanding, that treuly for myne aduersite nowe I not howe the sentence of the mosse rent people wyl ingen my fame. Therfore (quod he) if any knight shulde reue a treue sentence on suche matters, the cause of the dif ease must thou se wel, understande therupon after what ende it draweth, that is to saye good or bad, so ought he to haue his fame, or by goodnesse enfame by badde reste for every reasonable person, and namely of a wise man, his witte ought not without reason to some herde, so daunte in a matter to lyge. Where the fames of ỳ wife, thou shalt not lyge to done to some thou knowe, Lady quod I to me thenke wel that is moste laude and glo sying of certayne fames to hole chese and to herken them commendacion from lasse to good. And that is to reserued, as be a perpetuall myrour of remembraunce of worthynesse of the fames, and good exemple to other to beere to amendement, for ne shulde the tournaye of deserte to the knyghtes of the round table, and many other noble knyghtes after them, haue ben had in so grete reuerence, as they were in the rest degre of worldlynesse, and also after, as they were holden, and yet be, but deserued? Therfore (quod he) lady the chaunce ryght I meane to good I may chese to ben aduised, my wyl is to helpyng to encrease and vpon great matters of [illegible] and that thynges are the [illegible] lowde and glorious to alle people, [illegible] lyuynge of [illegible] and worshipe [illegible] belyed and laboured [illegible] lyuynge of [illegible] matters [illegible] lyue the lady to tell you the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

tampe purposed, and so for pure sorowe and of my meddynge and badde infame that I was in towne, the teares lashed out of myne eyen, were thus away washe, thanne the vnder hydde malyce and the rancoure of purposynge enuye forecaste and ymagyned, in destruction of moche people, shewed so openly, that had I ben blynde, with myne handes al the circumstaunce I might wel haue feled.

Nowe than the persones that suche thynges haue caste to redresse, for wrathe of my first meddynge, shopen me to dwel in this pyllarde prison, tyl Lachases my threde no lenger wolde twyne. And euer I was sought, if me lyst to haue grace of my lyfe, and frenesse of that prison, I shulde openly confesse howe peace might ben endused to enden al the first rancours. It was fully supposed my knowynge to be full in the matters. Than lady I thought that euery man that by any waye of ryght, rightfully done, maye helpe any comune helpe to ben saued, whiche thynge to kepe above al thynges I am holde to mayntayne, and namely in distroyeng of a wrong, al shulde I therthrough empeche myne owne fere, if he were gylty, and to do mysdede assemaunte. And mayster ne frende maye nought auayle to the soule of hym that in falsenesse deyeth, and also that I nere desyred wrath of the people, ne indignacyon of the worthy, for nothyng that euer I wrought or dyd, in any doyng my selfe eis, but in the mayntenaunce of these foresayd errours, and in hydynge of the prinitters therof. And that al the peoples lertes holdynge on the errours syde, weren blynde and of elde so ferforthe begyled, that debate and stryfe they mayntayned, and in distruction on that otherssyde, by which cause the peace, that moste in comunalty shulde be desired, was in poynte to be broken and annulled. Also the cytye of London, that is to me so dere and swete, in whiche I was forth growen, and more kyndelye loue haue I to that place, than to any other in erthe, as euery kyndely creature hathe full appetyte to that place of hys kyndly engendrure, and to wilne reste and peace in that stede to abyde: thylke peace shulde thus there haue ben broken and of al wyse it is commended and desyred. For knowe thynge it is, al menne that desyren to comen to the partyre peace euerlastyng, must the peace by god comended, both e mayntayn and kepe. Thys peace by angels voyce was confirmed, our god entrynge in this worlde. This as for his testament, he left to al his frendes, whanne he retourned to the place frome whēce he came: this his Apostel admoneseth to holden, without whiche man partely may haue none insyght. Also thys god by hys comynge, made not peace alone betwene heuenly and erthly bodyes, but also amonge vs on erthe, so he peace confirmed, that in one heed of loue, one body we shulde perfourme. Also I remēbre me wel how the name of Athenes was rather after the god of peace than of batayle, thewyuge that peace moste is necessarye to comunalties and cytyes. I than so stred by all these wayes toforne nempned, declared certayne poynres in thys wise. Fyrste that thylke persons that haddon me drawen to their purposes, and me not wittyng the priuy entent of their meanynge, drawen also the feoble wytted people, that haue none insight of gubernatyfe prudence, to clamure and to crye on matters that they styred, and vnder poynres for commune auauntage, they enbolded the passyte to take in the actiues doynge, and also styred innocentes of conuyng to crye after thynges, whiche quod they made not stande but we bē executours of the matters, and auctorite of execucion by comen election to vs be deliuered, and that muste entre by strengthe of your mayntenaunce, for we out of suche degree put, oppressyon of these olde hynderers shall agayne surmounten and putten you in suche subiection, that endelesse woe ye shul complayne. The gouernementes and they of youre cytes lette in the handes of couetenous cytezyns shall bryngē in pestylence and distruction to you good menne, and therfore let vs haue the comune admyny stracyon to abate suche yuelles. Also quod they it is worthy the good to cōmende, and thy gylty deserres to chastice. There ben cytezins many for ferde of execucion that shall be doone, for extorcions by hem committed, ben euer more auenst these purposes, and al other good menynges. Neuer the latter ladye, trewely the meaninge vnder these wordes, was fully to haue apeched the myghty senatoures, which haddon heauy herte for the mysgouernaunce that they seen. And so lady whan it fel that free election, by great clamour of muche people, for great disease of mysgouernaunce so feruently stoden in her election, that they hem submitted to euery manes face, rather than haue

haue suffered the maner and the rule of the bad gouernours, notwithstandynge that in the contrary beldeu moche comune men, that haue no consyderacion, but onely to bo-luntary lustes, without reason. But than thylke gouernour so forsaken, fayrynge to forne his vndoynge for mistrule in his tyme, hope to haue letted thilke electyon, and haue made a newe hym selfe to haue bene chosen, and vnder ꝓ mokel roze haue acted. These thynges lady knowen amonge the princes, and made open to the people, drawerh in a mendemente, that euery degree shall bene oz-dayned to stande there as he shulde, and that of errours comyng herafter, men may lyghtly to forne hande puruaye remedye, in thys wyse peace and rest to be furthered and hold. Of the whiche thynges lady, thilke persons broughten in answere to forne their most so-uerayne iudge, not coarted by payryng du-tes, openlye knowlegeden, and asked therof grace, so that apertely it preueth my wordes ben sothe, without forgynge of lesynges.

But nowe it greueth me to remembre these dyuers sentences, in tanglinge of these shepy people: certes me thynketh they oughten to maken toye that a sothe maye be knowe. For my trouth and my conscience bene witnesse to me bothe, that this knowynge sothe haue I sayde for no harme ne malyce of the per-sones, but onely for trouthe of my sacrament in my feygeaunce, by whiche I was charged on my kynges behalfe. But se ye not nowe lady, how the felonous thoughtes of this peo-ple, and couyns of wicked men, conspyren a-yen my forthfall trouth. See ye not euery wyst that to these errouyous opinyõs were assen-taunt and helpes to the noyse, and knewen al these thynges better than I my selucn, appa-rayleu to fynden newe frendes, and cleapen me false, and studyen howe they mowen in her mouthes werse plyte nempne. O god what maye this be, that thylke folke which that in tyme of my mayntenaunce, and whan my might auayled to stretch to ꝑ forsayd ma-ters, tho me cõmended, and gaue me name of trouth, in so manyfolde maners that it was ryghe in euery wyghtes eere, there as any of thylke people weren: and on the other syde, thilke company somtyme passed, reuynge me name of badde loos. Now both the peoples turned the good in to badde, and badde in to good, which thyng is wonder, that they hau wynge me sayng but sothe, arne now temp-ted to reply her olde prayesynges, and knowe me well in al doynges to ben trew, and saine openly that I false haue sayd many thinges. And they aleged nothynge me to ben false or untrewe, saue thilke mater knowleged by ꝑ parties hem selfe: and god wot other mater is none. Ye also lady know these thynges for trewe, I auaunte not in praysyng of my selfe, therby thulde I lese the precious feere of my conscience, but ye se wel ꝑ false opin-on of the people for my trouthe, in settinge out of false conspyred matter, and after the iugement of these clerkes, I shulde not hide the sothe of no maner person, whether hem ther, wherfore I wold not hide, ne put in the consyderacyon of trewe and of vnsele. And for comers herafter thilke false out of deuwere, al the sothe knowe of these thynges in acte, but as they varne I haue put in scripture, in perpetuel remembraunce of trouthe meanynge. For trewly lady me thynketh I ought to beare ꝑ name of trouthe al the lone of right wel melle haue that me my fortune: but now than the false chaf that clerkes sayne streweth as false as I haue the fame of trouthe, that to sothe sayde is brought to the rebel that I of trouthe shall I ben hyndred wythouten ende of trouthe.

Than gan I one fadme me bethe sayde in a chaunged voyce, lo how she hadde ꝑ spoken in any trone, I quod he that thou were holde, thou sayd any thyng whereby thou prouen-parde quod I the perfect thyng as I haue sayd, han knowleged hem selfe. Yea quod she but what is ther nayed howe wolden thou haue made it. Sothelye quod I was well knowen amonge the greatest, and other of the reale me, that I profered my body to largein in to prouynge of the thynges, that I haue shulde haue urged the ende: but for certaynte of my wordes they durst not to thylke iudge trou-blowe cortes quod she above all lones in this worlde, the name of mayntenaunce is moste pleasent to ladyes of my lore, but sy-then thou were redy, and thyne aduersaryes in thy presence retayled thilke doynge, the same ought to be so borne, as if vndede had take to the rode. And therfore euery wyght that a-

Iuuen-

ny dyspyte of reasō hath, and bereth of the infame, for these thynges hath this answere to saye: trewly thou saydest for thyne aduersatyes thy wordes affirmed. And yf thou haddest lyed, yet are they discomfyted, ỹ prise leaned on thy syde, so that fame shal hold down infame, he shal bring vpon none halfe.

What geueth the thyne enemy to sayn their owne shame, as thus: We arne discomfyted, and yet ours quarel is trewe. Shall not the loos of thy frendes ayenward bequace thilke enfame, and say they graunted a sothe without a stroke or fightig. Many men in batayle ben discomfyted and ouercome in a right ful quarel, that is goddes priuy iugement in them: but yet although the partie be volden, he maye with wordes say hys quarel is trewe, and to yelde him in the contrarie for drede of dethe, he is compelled: and he that grauntech and no stroke hath feled, he may not crepe away in this wise, by none excusacion. Indifferent folke wyl say, ye who is trewe, who is false, him self knoweth thobiges. Thus in euery syde fame shyneth to the good and to badde. But yet qd I some wyl saye I ne shulde for no dethe haue discouered my mayster, and so by vnkyndnes they wol knette infame to pursue me about: thus enemyes of vyl in manyfolde maner wol seche priuy serpentynes queintyses, to quenche and bystroye by denym of many besynesses the light of truthe, to make hertes to murmure ayenst my persone, to haue me in hayne wythouten anye cause. Nowe quod she bere me a fewe wordes, and thou shalte fully ben answerde I trowe. Be thy herth quod she right nowe by thy wordes, that sacrament of swearyng, ỹ is to say, chargyng by othe was one of the causes to make ỹ discouer the malicious ymaginacions tofore nempned, euery of the by knyttynge of copulacion muste haue these lawes. That is trew iubgemēt a right wyfenesse, in whyche thynge if anye of these lacke, the othe is mourned into the name of periury: than to make a trewe serment, muste nedes these thynges folowe, for ofte tymes a man to saye sothe, but iugement and iustyce folow he is forsworne: ensample of Herodes for holdyng of his serment was dampned.

Also to saye truthe rightfully the but in iugement otherwhile is forbodē by that al sothes be not to sayne. Therfore in iugemente in truthe and right wisenes is euery creature bounden vp payne of periury full knowynge to make, tho it were of his owne persone for drede of synne, after that worde better is it to dey than lyue false, and all wolde peruerted people false reporte make in vnkyndnesse, in that entent thy fame to reyse, whan lyght of truthe in these maters is forthe sprongen, and openly publyshed among cōmens, than shal nat suche derke enfame bare appere for pure shame of his falsnes, as some mē ther bē that their owne enfame can none otherwise borde or els excuse, but be hyndringe of other menes fame, which that by non other cause, clepen other men false, but for with they: owne falsnesse mowen they nat bene auaunsed, or els by false sklaundryng wordes, other men shendyn their owne trewe sklaunder, to make teme the lasse, for if such men wolden their eyen of their conscience reuoluen, thulden se the same sentence they legen on other, spring out of their sydes, with so many braunches it were unpossyble to nombre. To whiche therfore maye it be sayd in that thynge, this man thou demest, therin thy self thou condempnest. But quod she vnderstand not by these wordes, that thou wene me say the to be worthy sclaūder, for any mater tofore written, trewly I wolde wytnesse the contrary, but I sayn that the beames of sclaundryng wordes, may nat be done awaye tyl the daye of dome. For howe shulde it nat yet amonges so great plente of people ben many shrewes, sythen whilome but right persons in Noes shippe were closed, yet one was a shrewe and shorned his father. These thynges quod she I trowe, wherein that false fame is nat to drede, ne of wyse persons to accepte, and namelye not of thy Margarite, whose wise dom here after I thynke to declare, wherfore I wot wel suche thynge shal nat her astette, than of vnkyndenesse thyne of the hath she excused at the fulle. But now if thou wolden nat greue, me lyst a fewe thynges to shewe. Say on quod I what ye wol, I trowe ye meane but trouthe, and my profyte in tyme commynge. Trewly quod she that is soth, so thou con wel kepe these wordes, and in the inest secre chambre of thyne hert, so faste hem close that they neuer flytte, than shalte thou fynde hem anayenge. Loke nowe what people hast thou serued, whiche of hem all in tyme of thyne erre euer the refreshed, by the valewe of the lest copued plate that walketh in money. Whe

was

was sory or made any rewth for thy diseasse if they hadde getten their purpose of thy misauenture sette they nat an hawe. Lo whan thou were enprisonned, how faste they hyed in helpe of thy deliueraunce. I wene of thy dethe they yeue but lyte: They loked after no thynge, but after their owne lustes. And yf thou lyke say the sothe, al that meyny that in this brigge the broughten, lokeden rather after thyne helpes, than the to haue relieued.

Owen nat yet some of hem money for hys commens-paydest not thou for some of her dispences, tyl they were tourned out of Scotlande. Who yaue the euer ought for any tydynge thou madest? yet pardye, some of hem token money for thy chambre, and putte thopens in hys purse bi meeryng of the tenter.

Lo for which a company thou medlest, that neyther the ne them selfe mighten helpe of vnkyndnesse, nowe they beate the name yt thou supposest of hem for to haue. What myght thou more haue done than thou diddest, but yf thou woldest in a false quarell haue ben a fyghtynge martyr? I wene thou feddest as longe as thou myghte, their pryuete to counsayle, whiche thynge thou beleft lenger than thou shuldest. And thilke yought the money no peny wolde pare, they wende thy returne hadde ben an impossyble. Nowe myght thou better haue hem proued, but thus in thy nedy diseases? How had thou ensaple for whome thou shalt medle: certenly this loue is worth many goodes.

Ofte gan I muse to myne me these wordes, thinke on my speche, for certayne here after it will do the lykynge, and howe so euer thou se fortune shape her wheele to tourne, this meditacion by no waye resolue. For eyther fortune the wel ber fayred, whan she thinketh to begyle. And as me thought here to forne thou sayedest thy loos in loue for thy right wyfe vncle ought to be taxed, shulde be alyked in tyme comynge. Thou myght in loue so the haue, that loos and fame shull so ben taxed, that to thy frendes colour, and fayrest to thyn enemys endelesse shull endure. But if thou were yone shepe amonges the hundred were lefte in defaute and one of the bay hadde erred, and nowe to the flocke art trilooued, the shepheerd hadde in the no loue, and thou aren to the forest tourne, but that right ap the folowe and anguysshe was gret in tyme of thine out ware gonge, ryght so loue and gladnesse shall be doubled to sen the conuerted, and nat as Lothes wyfe aren lokynge, but hoole counsayle with the shepe folowyng, and with them grasse and herbes gadre. Neuer the later quod the I fare not these thynges for no wantrust that I haue in suppolynge of the otherwyse thanne I shulde. For treuely I wotte wel, that nowe thou arte sette in suche a purpose out of whe the lyste not to parte. But I saye it, for many a yen there beue, that to hastynge of other mènes doynges setten al their cure, and lyghtly deryen the bad, to clatter rather than the good, and haue no wil their owne maner to amende. They also haue of false rancoure lyghtly hauen, and there that lyste them to breth, sodaynly in their mouthes poureth the habundaunce of the herte, and vnsauery stones, stones out thrist. Wherefore counsayle is euer more openlye and aperte to what place thou sey, to enterplete with wordes and meanynges, to as sette as thou myght, fyrst fayle, and leaue for to be yong to hem be suche maner bodes vse and be patient and of sadder age. For to euer more of the dayes, I haue my ladyes grace, whom I shall serue longe as me pleasaunt hath cause. And eftsones quod I, felle, if thou thus chaunged hast thy meynage in thyne herte, vnto me patiently departe, and take good pleasaunce of your diuersite, that thou desyrest after wel of loue, to a manes of a maidens gre. Shall I repre the into grene forynges as men clothes in open fryght, to spenden tyme at his worshyppe wel bestowed. Me myght as thou were of moche folde errour, ygere to thy wil be ensample of manyfolde forewenes, to good fauour to forgeuyng al errour delyuering causeth diuerse loue, with manye yeares drawe to folowe, and than shall all these errours make the folowynge world ryght to fynde bugely enclosed, blacke and white for togyder, euery for other more fayrer, and so deme euery thynges contrary to kynde. But vnlawe that goothe alwaye to lose, and prayse worthynesse be any cause folowynge after, maketh to wyle the yike bonour in double of worth, and that quencheth the sparke of the

fyrst

fyrst enfame. Why wenyste I saye these thinges, in hyndrynge of thy name? Naye nay god wotte, but for pure encreasyng worthyp thy ryght wyseneste to cõmende, & thy trouth to seme the more. Wost not wel thy selfe, that thou in fourme of makyng passeth nat Adam that eate of the apple. Thou passeth nat the stedfastnesse of Jesse, that eatynge of the grape become dronke. Thou passyst nat the chastyte of Lothe, that lay by his doughter. Eke the nobley of Abraham, whom god reproued by his pride Also Dauydes meseneste, whyche for a woman made Urye be slawe. & that also perfect of Troye, in whome no defaute myght be founde, yet is he reproued that he ne hadde with manhode nat suffred ỹ warre begon, ne Paris to haue went into Grece, by whom gonne all the sorowe: for trewly him lacketh no venym of prive conseruyng, whyche that openly leaueth a wrong to withsay.

Lorke an olde prouerbe amonges many other, the that is stylle semeth as he graunted.

Nowe by these ensamples, thou might fully understand, that these thinges ben writte to your lernynge and in right wyseneste of tho persones, as thus: To euery wyght hys defaute cõuytted, made goodnes afterwardes done, be the more in reuerence and in open thynge, for ensample is it nat long in holy chirche. Lo howe necessarye was Adams synne, Dauid the kynge gat Salomon the kinge, of her that was Urves wife. Truly for reproue is none of these thynges writte: Right so tho I reherce thy before dede, I reprene ỹ neuer the more, ne for no vyllany of the are they rehersed. but for worthyp, so thou cõnne wel here after, and for profyte of thy selfe, I rede thou on hem thynke.

Than sayde I right thus. Ladye of vnyte and accorde, enuye and wrathe lurken there thou comest in place, ye weten wel your selue and so done many other, that whyle I administred the office of comendoynge, as in ruling of the stablyshmentes amonges the people, I defouled neuer my conscyence for no maner dede, but euer by wytte and by counsayle of the wyseste the maters weren drawē to their ryght endes. And thus trewly for you lady I haue desyred suche cure, and certes in your seruyce was I nat ydel, as ferre as suche doynge of my cure stretcheth. That is a thyng quod she that may drawe many herres of noble, and voice of cõmune in to glory, and fame is nat but wretched and fickle.

Alas that mankynde coueyteth in so leude a wyse, to be rewarded of any good dede, syth glory of fame in this worlde, is nat but hyndrynge of glorye in tyme comynge. And certes quod she yet at the hardest such fame in to heuen, is not the erth but a centre to ỹ cercle of heuen. A pricke is wonder lytel in respecte of al the cercle, and yet in al this pricke may no name be borne in maner of prevynge for many obstacles, as waters and wyldernesse, and straunge langages, and not ouelye names of men ben stylled and holden oute of knowlegynge by these obstacles, but alsoo tytes and realmes of prosperite be letted to be knowe, and their reason hindred, so that they mow not ben parfitely in mennes proper understandynge. Howe shulde then the name of a synguler londenoys passe the glorious name of London, whyche by many it is commended, and by many it is lacked, and in many mo places in erthe not knowen, than knowen: for in many countrees lytel is London in knowyng or in speche, & yet among one maner of people may not suche fame in goodnes come, for as many as prayse comenly as many lacken. Fye tha on such maner fame, slepe & suffre him ỹ knoweth prisyre of herres, to dele such fame, in thilke place there nothynge ayenst a forth shal neither spoke ne dare apere, by attourney ne by other maner. Howe many great named and many great inworthynesse lofed, han be tofore this tyme, that now out of memorie are sodden and clenely forgetten, for defaute of writinges, and yet scriptures for great elde so ben defaced, that no perpetualte maye in hem ben truged. But yf thou wolte make comparisoun to euer, what toye mayst thou haue in erthly name, it is a fayre lykenesse, a pees or one grayne of wheate, to a thousande chyppes ful of corne charged.

What nombre is betwene the one & tother, and yet mowe bothe they be numbred, & ende in rekenynge haue. But trewly all that may be numbred, is nothing to recken, as to thilke that maye nat be numbred, for ofte thynges ended is made comparison, as one lytel, to ther great, but in thynges to haue an ende, & another no ende, suche comparisoun may not be founden. Wherfore in heuen to bene loued with god hath none ende, but endeleste endureth, and thou canste nothynge done aright, but thou desyre ỹ remoue therof be heled

and

and in euery wightes eare, & that dureth but a pricke, in respecte of ꝑ other. And so thou seest rewarde of folkes smale wordes, and of vayne prayslynges. Trewely therein thou lesest the guerdon of vertue, and lesest the grettest valoure of conscyence, and vphap thy renome euerlastyng. Therfore boldely renome of fame of the erthe shuld be hated, and fame after deth shuld be desyred, of werkes of vertue asketh guerdonyng, and the soule causeth al vertue. Thā the soule delyuered out of prisone of erthe, is most worthy suche guerdone amonge to haue in the euerlastyng fame, and nat the body that causeth all mannes yuels.

Of twey thinges art thou answered as me thynketh quod I. oue and yf anye thynge be in doute in thy soule, shewe it forth thyne ignorauuce to clere, and leaue it for no shame. Certes quod I there ne is no bodye in this worlde, that aught coude saye by reasonayenst any of your skylles, as I leue, and by my wytte nowe sele I wel, that yuel spekers or beaters of enfame, may lytel greue or let my purpose, but rather by suche thynge my quarel to be forthered. Yea qd she and it is proued also that, the ylke iewel in my kepynge shal nat there thorow be steered, of the lest moment ꝑ myght be ymagyned. That is soth qd I. Wel qd she than seeneth there, to declare ꝑ thy insufficiaūce is no maner letting as thus, for that she is so worthye thou shuldest not clymbe so hygh, for thy mocbles and thyne estate arne voyded, thou thynkest fallen in suche mysterie, that gladnesse of thy purpose wol nat on the diffende. Certes quod I that is forthe right such thoughte is in myne hert, for cōmenly it is spoken, and for an olde prouerbe it is leged: he that heweth to hye, wyth chyppes he may lese his syght. Wherfore I haue bene aboute in al that euer I myghte, to studye wayes of remedye by one syde or by another. Nowe quod she god forbede arte thou seke any other doynges, but suche as I haue lerned the in our tellyng whiles, and suche herbes as ben planted in oure gardyns. Thou shalte well understande, that aboue manis but one god alone. Now quod I han men to forne this tyme trusted in wyues and chaunmementes, and in helpes of spyrites that dwelle in the ayre, and therby they han getten their desyres, where as fust for al his manly power he daunced behynde.

O quod she fye on suche maters, for trewly that is sacrilege, and that shal haue no sort with any of my seruaūtes, in myne eyen shall suche thinge not be loked after. Howe often is it cōmaunded by these passed wyse, that to one god shal men serue, and not to goodes. And who that is fle to haue mone helpes, shal aske none helpe of foule spirites. Alas, is nat man maked semblable to god? wost thou not wel that all vertue of lyuelych werkynge by goddes purueyaunce is but erpurte to reasonable creature in erthe, is not euer more a thus shalte god-made but omto mānes contemplacion, understandynge in heuen and earthe, and in helle. Hathe not man enough with stones, soule of werryng with trees and herbes. Hathe he not soule of feringe, with beestes, fyshes, and fowles, and he hath soule of reason and vnderstandyng with aungels, so that in him is knytte al maner of creatures by a reasonable proporcyoun. Also mans made of all the foure elementes. Also mans syre is reckened in hym alone the hyest of god principalyte aboue al thinges. Thou hast his soule here, nowe a thousande myles nowe ferre nowe nygh, nowe here nowe there, as ferre in a moment, as in a moment of tenne wynter, and al this is in maner of remaunce and disposycion. Thā shal it, that men ben lyche vnto goddes, and dren of moche heyghte. But nathe forbede thynges vnderpurte to the wyl of reasonable creatures, God forbede any mans hert that lordshyppe, and aske helpe of any thinge lower than hymselfe, & than nat of the thinges vnnommable. Nowe wel wher than thou were to loue to hyghe, syth nothinge is the aboue but god alone. Trewly I trowe wel, that thilke iewell is in a maner euen lyne of degree there thou art the ielue and nought aboue, saue thus. Aungell vpon aungel, manne vpon manne, and deuyll vpon deuyll, han a maner of soueraygnte, and that shal cease at the daye of dome. And to I saye, thoughe thou be putte to serue the ylke iewel duryng thy lyfe, yet is that no seruage of vnderputtynge, but a maner of trauaylynge plesaunce, to conquere and gette that thou hast nat. I sette nowe the hardest, in my seruice nowe thou deydest for sorowe of wāntynge in thy desyres: trewly al heuenly bodyes with one voice shul come and make melody in thy comynge, and saye welcome our

In ni fere

fere, and worthy to entre in to Jupiters ioy,
for thou with myght haste ouercome dethe,
thou woldest neuer flytte out of thy seruyce,
and we al shul now pray to the goddes rowe
by rowe to make thilke Margarite ꝑ no routh
had in this persone, but vnkyndely withoute
comforte lette the deye, shal besette her self in
suche wyse, that in erthe for parte of benge-
aunce, shal she no ioye haue in loues seruyce,
and whan she is deed, than shal her soule ben
broughte vp in to thy presence, and whyder
thou wylte chese, thilke soule shal bene com-
mytted. Dyels after thy dethe anone all the
forsayd heuenly bodies by one accorde, shal
be nommen from thilke perle, all the vertues
that fyrste her were taken, for she hathe hem
forfeyted, by that on the my seruaunte in thy
lyue she wolde not suffre to worche all ver-
tues, withdrawen by might of the hygh bo-
dyes: & he than shuldest thou wene so anye
more. And yf the lyste to loke vpon the lawe
of kynde, and wyth ordre whiche to me was
ordayned, forthely none age, none ouertour-
nynge tyme, but hytherto hadde no tyme ne
power to chaunge the wedding, ne ꝑ knotte
to vnbynde of two hertes thorow one assent
in my presence, togyther accorden to endure
tyll dethe hem departe. What trowest thou
euery deer worre the menyng and the preuy
entent of these thynges? they were for sothe
that suche accorde may not be, but the rose of
mayden hede be plucked, do waye do waye,
they knowe nothynge of thys: for consente of
two hertes alone, maketh the fastenynge of
the knotte, neyther lawe of kynde ne mannes
lawe, determyneth nether the age ne the qua-
lyte of persones, but onelye accorde betwene
thylke twaye. And trewlye after tyme that
suche accorde by theyr consent in hert, is enseal-
led and put in my tresorye amonges my preu-
ye thynges: than gynneth the name of spou-
sayle, and although they breaken forwarde
bothe, yet suche matter enseled is kept in re-
membraūce for euer And se nowe that spou-
ses haue the name anon after accord, though
the rose be not take. The aungell bade Jo-
seph take Marye hys spouse, and to Egypte
wende: lo he was cleped spouse, and yet to-
forne ne after neyther of hem bothe mente no
fleshly luste know, wherfore the wordes of
trouth accorden, that my seruauntes shulden
forsake bothe father and mother, and be ad-
herande to hys spouse, and they two in vnyte
of one flesshe shulden accorde. And this wyse
two that werne fyrste in a lytell maner disa-
cordaunt, hygher that one and lower that o-
ther, bene made euenlyche in gree to stonde.
But nowe to enfourme the that ye ben lyche
to goddes, these clerkes sayne, and in deter-
mynacion shewen, that thre thynges haue ꝑ
names of goddes ben cleped, that is to sayn:
man, dyuel, and ymages, but yet is there but
one god, of whom all goodnesse, al grace, and
al vertue cometh, and he his louyng & trewe,
and euerlastyng, and prime cause of al bein
thynges: but men ben goddes, louynge and
trew, but not euerlastyng, and that is by ad-
opcyoun of the euerlastynge God. Dyuels
ben goddes, swerynge by a maner of lyuynge,
but neyther ben they trewe ne euerlastynge,
and their name of godlihed they han by vsur
pacion, as the prophete sayth: Al goddes of
gentyles, that is to say paynyms, are dyuels.
But ymages bene goddes by nuncupacion,
and they ben nether lyuynge ne trewe, ne e-
uerlastynge: After these wordes they cleapen
goddes ymages wrought wyth mennes han
des. But nowe reasonable creature, that by
adopcion alone arte to the great god euerla-
stynge, and therby thou arte god cleped: lette
thy fathers maners so entre thy wyttes, that
thou myght folowe, in as moche as longeth
to the thy fathers worthynge, so that in no
thynge thy kynde from hys wyll declyne, ne
from his nobley peruerte. In thys wyse yf
thou werche, thou arte aboue all other thyn-
ges saue god alone, and to say no more tyme
hert to serue in to hye a place.

FYlly haue I now declared thyn estate
to be good, so ꝑ folowtherafter, & that
the abiectiō fyrst be ꝑ aleged in worthynes of
thy Margarite shall not the lette, as it shall
forther the, and encrease the, it is nowe to de-
clare, ꝑ last obiection in nothing maye greue.
Yes certes qō I bothe greue and let mutte
it nedes, the contrarye maye not ben proued,
and se nowe why. Qwyle I was glorious in
worldly welfulnesse, and had suche goods in
welth as maken men riche, tho was I drawn
in to companyes that loos, prise, and name
yeuen: tho louteden blasours, tho curteyden
glosours, tho welcomede flatterers, tho wor
thypped thilke, that nowe deynen nat to loke.
Euery wight in suche erthly welthe habundant,
is holde noble, precious, beyng ie, and wise to

do

do what he shal, in any degree that men hym set, al be it that the sothe be in the contrary of al tho thynges: But he that can, ne neuer so wel him behaue, & hathe vertue habundaut in manyfolde maners, & be not welthed with suche erthly goodes, is holde for a foole, and sayd his witte is but sotted. Lo how false for auer is holde trewe. Lo howe trewe is cleaped false for wantyng of goodes. Also lady, dignitees of offyce maken men mykel comended as thus: he is so good, wer he out his pe-re shulde men not fynde. Trewly I trowe of some such that are so praysed, were they out ones, another shulde make hym so be knowe, he shulde of no wyse no more ben loked after: but onely fooles wel I wotte, desyren suche new thynges. Wherfore I wonder that thilk gouernoure, out of whome alone the causes proceden, that gouernen all thynges, whiche that hath ordeyned this worlde in werkes of the kyndely bodyes so be gouerned, not with wastedast or happyous thynge, but with rules of reason, which shewen the course of certayne thynges: why suffreth he suche flyding chaunges, that mysturnen suche noble thynges as ben we men, that arne a fayre perfell of the erth, and holden the vpperest degre vnder god of benigne thinges, as ye sayde right nowe your selfe, shulde neuer man haue ben set in so worthy a place, but if his degre were ordayned noble. Alas, thou that knyttest the purueyaunce of all thynges, why lokest thou not to amenden these defaures: Ye shrewes that han wicked maners, syttен in chayres of domes, lambes to punyshen, there wolues shulden ben punished. Lo vertue shyned naturelly, for pouerte lurketh and is hydde vnder cloude: but the moone false forsworne, as I knowe my selfe, for auer & vices hathe vsurped to shyne by day light, with peynture of other mennes prayssinges: & trewly thylke forged list fouly shulde fade, were the trouth away of colours feyned. Thus is night tourned into daye, and daye in to nyght, wynter in to sómer, and sómer in to wynter, not in dede, but in mysleapyng of folyshe people.

Now quod she what wenest thou of these thinges? how feelest thou in thin herte, by what gouernaunce that chys cometh aboute?

Certes quod I that wotte I neuer, but yit be that fortune hath graunt frome aboue, to lede the ende of men as her lyketh, shoone I se quod she the entent of thy meanyng: Lo breause thy worldly goodes ben fullyche dispent, thou berafte out of dignite of offyce, in whiche thou madest thy gatherynge of thilke goodes, and yet byddest in that offyce by counsaile of wise, any thyng were ended: and true were vnto hem, whose profyte thou shuldest loke, and seest nowe many that in thylke heruest made of the mokel, and now for glosing of other, deuelth the nought to forther, but enhaunsen false shrewes, by wytnessynge of trouthe. These thynges greueth thyn herte to seue thy selfe thus abated, and than frayle of mankinde ne setteth but lytel by the lefers of suche rychesse, haue he neuer so much vertue, and so thou wenest of thy wyll to renne in dispyte, and not ben accepted in to grace: All this shal the nothinge hynder. Nowe quod she first thou wost wel thou lostest nothing that euer mightest thou chalenge for thyne owne: Whan nature brought the forthe, come thou not naked out of thy mothers wombe? thou haddest no ryches, and whan thou shalt entre in to the ende of euery fleshly bode, what shalt thou have with the thanne? So euery ryches thou hastle in tyme of the frumge, is but lente, thou might therin chalenge no proprietie. And sene we euery thynge is anothines owne, he may do therwith what him lyketh, to yeue or to kepe: but rede me nowe nest from the lost, yf thy myght had streched so forforth, sayn thou woldest have ben holpen with mo other: and so amongs thy wyl be they departed fro the, wherfore they were neuer thyne. And if thou lauded & loued any wight, for he is ruffled with suche manere ryches, & art in that beleue begiled, for thou wenest thilke ioye to be felicite or eas ful, & he that hath lost suche happes to bewaile. Ye for sothe qd I. Wel qd she than wot I proue yvnsely in that wyse is to prayse, & to the tother is the contrary to be lacked. How to qd I. For vnsely qd she begyleth not, but the lyeth thentent of her worthynge. Certes. Selynesse begyleth, for in prosperite she maketh a rape in blyndenesse, that is she windeth him to make sorow whan she withdraweth. Wolt thou not qd she prayse him better that sheweth to the his herte, tho it be with bitade wordes & dispytous, than him yt gloseth & thinketh in their absence to do the many harmes. Certes qd I the one is to comende, & the other to lacke a dispyte. Ha qd she ryst so ease wyfely he talketh, gloseth & flatereth, & yghe-

Ffffiii. ly voydeth

ly boydeth whan she most pleasantly sheweth, and euer in her absence she is about to do the tene and sorowe in herte: But vnsely al be it with bi and bi there, she weth what she is, and so doth not that other, wherfore vnsely doth not begyle. Selynesse discerneth: vnsely put away doute. That one maketh men blynde, that other openeth their eyen in the wynge of wyerchednesse. The one is ful of drede to lese that is nat hys owne: that other is sobre and maketh men discharged of mokell heuynesse in burthen: The one draweth a man from very good, ỳ other haleth hym to vertue by the bookes of thoughtes. And wynest thou not that thy disease hath done the mokel more to wynne, than euer yet thou lostest? and more than euer the contrarye made the wynne. Is nat a great good to thy thinkyng, for to knowe the hertes of thy sothfast frendes. Parby they be proued to the ful, and the trewe haue discouered from the false. Trewly at the goynge of the yike broder ioy, ther yede no more away, than the yike that was not thyne proper: he was neuer from that lyghtly departed, thyne owne good therfore leaueth it styll with thee. Nowe good (quod she) for howe moche wolden thou somtyme haue bought, thys very knowyng of thy frendes, from the flatterying lyes that they gloſed, whan thou thought thy selfe sely. But thou that playnest of losse in rychesse, hast founden the most dere worthy thyng that thou cleapest vnsely, hath made the moche thinge to wynnen And also for conclusyoun of all, he is frende that nowe leaueth not hys hert from thyn helpes. And yf that Margaryte denyeth nowe not to suffre her vertues shyne to the wardes, with spreadynge beames, as farre or farther than if thou were sely in worldely ioye: Trewly I saye not els but she is some dele to blame.

Ah, peace (quod I) and speake no more of thys, myne herte breaketh, now thou touchest any suche wordes. Wel (quod she thanne lette vs syngen, thou herest no more of these thynges at thys tyme.

¶ Thus endeth the first booke of the Testament of Loue, and here after folowyth the seconde.

VEry welthe maye not be founde in al this world, and that is wel sene: Lo howe in my moste comfort, as I wende a meel supposed to haue had ful answerre of my contrary thoughtes, sodaynely it was vanished. And al ỳ workes of mã faten in ỳ same wise, whã folke wenen best her entent for to haue, a wylles to perfourme, anon chaunging of the lyfe syde to the right halue, tourneth it so clene in to another kynde, ỳ neuer shal it come to the fyrste plyte in doynge.

O this wrongful steerynge so soone otherwysed out of knowynge, but for my purpose was at my begynnynge, and so dureth yet, yf God of hys grace eyne woll me graunt, I thynke to perfourme this worke, as I haue begonne in loue, after as my thynne wytte, with inspyracion of him that hilderh al grace wol suffre. Greuously god wotte haue I suffred a great throwe that the romayn emperour, whiche in vnite of loue shulde accorde and euery with other, in cause of other to auaunce, and namely sythe thys empyre to be corrected of so many sectes in hereſy, of faith, of seruyce, of rule in loues relygion. Trewly al were it but to shende errouyous opinions, I may it no lenger suffre: for many menne there ben that sayn loue to ben in graunt and sande, that with see ebbynge and flowynge weweth, as ryches that sodaynly vanisheth. And some sayne that loue shulde be in windy blastes, that stoundmele tourneth as a phane, and glorie of renome, whiche after iustes of the variaunt people is areesed or stylled. Many also wenen that in the sunne and the moone, and other sterres, loue shulde ben fonden, for amonge al other planettes moste soueraynly they shynen, as dignitees in reuerence of estates rather than good han and occupyen. Ful many also there ben that in okes and in huge postes suppoſen loue to ben grounded, as in strength and in myght, which mowen not helpen their owne wretchednesse, whan they gynne to fall. But suche diuersyte of sectes ayenst ỳ ryghtful byleue of loue, these errours ben forth spredde, that loues seruantes in the trewe rule and stedfast fayth, in no place darne apere: Thus irrecuperable ioye is

wene

went, and anoy endeles is entred. For no man aryght reproueth suche errours, but confirmeth their wordes, and sayth that badde is noble good, and goodnesse is badde: to whiche folke the prophet biddeth, wo without ende.

Also many tonges of great falsetee ruleth in this lynge maner, principallye in my tymes, not onely with wordes, but also with armes, loues seruauntes and professe in his religion of newe rule, purposed to confounde and to distroyen. And for as muche as their fathers, that our christen lawe approued and streng thed to the iewes, as to men reasonable, & of diuine lerned, proued that the sayth with re sones, and with auctoures of the olde testa ment & of the newe, her peruersite to distroy: vnto parymme, that for beestes and houn des were holde, to putte hem out of their er rour, was myracles of god shewed. These thynges were signified by comyng of thangel to the shepherdes, and by the sterre to pay nims bryges, as who sayth: Angell resona ble to resonable creature, and sterre of myra cles to people beestial not lerned, were sent to enforme. But I louers certes in all my cun ning and with al my mights, trewly I haue no suche grace in vertue of myracles, ne for no diuersite of faithes, sufficeth not auc tryties alone, but enchase suche heresyes and wayward noures of falsetes. Wherfore I wot well if then that trewe bernen, and resons approued in hem, the clowde of errour harde ber reason be wonde probable reasons, which that catchende wot ryghtfully may not with stande. Vnto my trewe lynge Iudye I haue or dered hem, with thauctorite inspired by manes reason, to graunt that be enduced.

Nowe gyueth my penne to quake, to thin ken on the sentences of the enuyous people, which alway ben redy, both vnder and ouer to shome and to rape this lewde booke, and me for to confounde and hate with their bestes thes Iewes so dispyse, that although my booke be lewde, yet shall it ben more lewde holden, and by wicked wordes in many maner apay red. Certes me thynketh the soure of their badde speche, vnto me is as full bothe myne eeres. O good prevous Pagarye myne ber suffre wepen, I wyll ne rebuke of suche maner speche, but trewly I wotte wel what your wisedome shal answere. For of god makere of lyght & maister I rede, that to none enuye ne yuel haue I drawe this matter togyder, but onely for goodnesse to marrayn, and errours in falsetes to distroy. Therfore (as I sayd with reason I thynke) thise for sayd errours to distroye and demaare.

These resons and suche other, either enduce men in loues seruice, to eschewe of pesti tyre blysse, or to fulfarthen in ouerest ser sent fully now they not lyghte, if then sayth hath no merite of meede, when reason shewth the verite preuyed to beyng. For vnto no reason the parfite ende of loue by no ways may make to be compassed. Lo what is a perfect of louers rede, parfite loue can good seruice, of them defende from pre hender in bodely derynge, the lyuinge of the soule, nat as by a glasse to haue remembrau cyon of tyme comynge, but thinke stedfastly gyned and thoughe, after late to them be holdynge: whatbert, what reason or vn derstandyng can make hys beastes ascried and knowe without a face of bodyes sight none. When thanne of this sacrament in bryde, and loue entre into the soule, most amonge other vertues as queene

The rede of suche [illegible] al couuertes, in all [illegible]

[illegible] moyen not ben suffred the soule [illegible] o werke, in how vnrede vnglorious [illegible] nedes [illegible] the name of loue amonge [illegible] in amonge people, [illegible] to it be that meane shape [illegible] outen in bryde, [illegible] other thinges, that the soule [illegible] noble name, in [illegible] men haue a great lykynge in [illegible] of the name, wherefore [illegible] wrote, & to the ruled of [illegible] it auctord in a matter of [illegible] cue, it be radde, in [illegible] cellence of thylke name [illegible] thoure and wurshype of [illegible] and to what entente it [illegible] tures betwen hem [illegible] whomes is enuyde [illegible] ende. Aristotle [illegible] that the [illegible] new thynge in a [illegible] A trewe [illegible] ble as thylke [illegible] ende, wherfore [illegible] to dured to be [illegible]

then

then it is hys fynal cause: Right so the actes of my boke loue, and loue is noble, wherfore though my boke be leude, the cause with whi che I am stered, & for whom I ought it don, noble to forthe been bothe. But bycause that in connynge I am yonge, and canne yet but crepe, thys leude A, b, c, haue I sette in to lernynge, for I cannot passen the telling of thre as yet: and yf god wyl in shorte tryme I shall amend this leudnesse in ioynyng of syllables, whiche thynge for dulnesse of wytte I maye not in thre letters declare. For trewly I saye the goodnesse of my Dagarvte perle wolde yeue matter endytynge to many clerkes: certes her meter is more to me swetter than any lyurynges, wherefore my lyppes mowen not suffyce in sothynge of her ful laude and worthynesse as they shulde. But who is that in knowyng of ryders of heuen, & putteth hys reasones in the erthe: I for sothe may not with blere eyen, & shinning sone of bernue in bright wheles of thys Dagarvte behold, therfore as yet I maye her not discryue in lettres as I wolde. Ye tryme commynge in another tretis thorow goddes grace, this somme clerenesse of bertue to be knowne, and howe she enlumyneth all thys daye, I thynke to declare.

In this meane whyle thys comfortable lady gan fynde a wonder matter of endityngge in larm, but trewly the noble resons in rethorike wyle kepe me so stedfast, that my connyng shal not stretche to remembre, but the sentence I trow somdele haue I in mynde. Certes they were wonder sweet of sowne, and they were touched al in lamentacyon wyse, and by no wrestles of mynde: For thus ganne she synge in larm, as I make rehersynge it in our englysshe tonge.

Alas that these heuenly bodyes their light and course shoulden, as nature yaue hem in commaundement at the gynnyng of the first age, but these thynges in fre chorle of reason han none understandynge: but manne that ought to passe all thynge of bonge, of right course in kynde, ouer whelmeth sothnesse by his longful tyrle, and hath drawen the sterre of enuye to gon by hys syde, that the eyen of me that shulde be hys shrewde sonne, so chrisley, that it wened thrik errour thorow hem come in, shulde ben myne owne defaute. Therfore therfore I haue me withdrawn, and made my dwellynge out of lande in an yle by my selfe, in the occian closed, and yet sayne there many they haue me harbertowed, but god wot they faylen. These thynges me greuen to thynke, and namely on passed gladnesse, that in thys worlde was wonte me disporte of highe and lowe, and now it is fayled: they that wolden maistres me haue in thylke stounde. In heuen on hygh aboue Saturnes sphere, in seasonable tryme were they loged, but now some queynte countaylours that in no house wolde suffre me soiourne, wherof is pyte: And yet sayne some that they me haue in celler with wyne shed, in garniere there corne is layde, couered with whete, in sacke sowed with wol, in purse with money falle knytte, amonge paunes mouled in a wyche, in presse amonge clothes layd with ryche pelure arayed, in stable amonge horse & other beestes as begges, shepe, and neet, and in other maner wise. But thou maker of lyght in wynkyng of thyn eye the sonnes queynte wolde right wel that I in trewe name was neuer thus herbertowed.

Sonnyme to sayn I sonne in the firmamente was sworn, I bare both stalle & mure, to serue it wher I wolde. With me I pope weare fore, & I the was worshyped of al holy church huges bade me their croune holde. The law was set as it shulde before I suge as ded I poor durst shewe his grete as the ryche, for al his money. I defended the ravages, and was redy for the poore to par. I made grete feestes in my tyme, and noble songes, and maried damoselles of grete feture, whom ten golde or other ryches. I coure clerkes for wytte of schole, I sette in churches, and made suche persones to preache: and the wel feture in holy churche honed and beuaut, to pleasaunce bothe of god and of the people. But nowe the trube for symonie is aslawed and slombreth al holy churche. I coure shewe me bothe for hys ardaris, power is contrarie for hys debates, nature is ofberoute for hys wronges, nowe is lefelt for hys songes, per fourt and prisumbir alone, with whiche maistres shulde entreate. And yet as thus shewe be bynde, fre herte is fortake, and bolde frigeour is take, I coie accordeth, for lacke there ben that voluntarye lustes haunten courte burbi baudry, that tyl nat wonant and more wol playe and wake, but in the chirche che at matyns be is brynde, for cursed deprysion of hys flomake therfore be shulde calle brane bred, & to dyd his tyte, his clarefyed

with to strengthen. Hys auter is broke, and lowe lythe in poynte to gone to the erthe, but hys horse must ben easy and hye to beare him ouer great waters. Hys chalyce poore, but he hath ryche cuppes. No towayle but a shete there god shal ben handled. And on his meate borde there shal ben borde clothes and towelles many payre. At masse serueth but a clergyoun: yue squiers in hal. Poore chauncel, open holes in euery syde: beddes of sylke with tapytes going al aboute hys chambre. Poore masse boke and leude chapelayne, and broken surplyce with many an hole: good houndes and many, to hunte after harte and hare, to fede in their kenels. Of poore men haue they great care, for they euer craue, and nothynge offren, they wolden haue hem doluen. But amonge legystres there dare I not come, my doynge they sayne maken hem nedye, they ne wolde for nothyng haue me in town, for than were tort and forth nought worthe an haue aboute to plesen no men, but thilke grenous and torcious be in might and in doyng: these thynges to some sayd mowe wel if men lyste rymc, trewly they accorde nothynge. And for as moche as al thinges by me shulde of right ben gouerned, I am forye to se that gouernaunce fayleth, as thus: To leue smale and low gouerne the hye, and bodyes aboue. Certes yf policye is nought, it is forbode by them that of gouernaunce treaten & enformen. And right as beestly wytte shulde ben subiecte to reson, so erthely policye in suche, the lower shulde ben subiecte to yhet is that is worth the body, but it be gouerned with thy soule right to lyue: of nought is worthe erthly power, but if virginity & prudence in herdes gouerne the smale, to whiche hordes the smale owen to obey, and suffre in their gouernaunce. But foure rammelle ayen woarde shulde thy the wethys wyfe. I am seruaunt of these creatures to me delyuered, not lorde but defendour: not maystre but enfourmer, not possessoure but in possessyon, and to hem lyche accrem which sparowes shullen stelen, her bridel to mouthe and forth bringe vnder swetnesse ayenst all rauenous foules and beestes, and not to be tyraunte them selfe. And than the smale in reste and quiete, by the herdes wel disposed, owen for their soueraynes helth and prosperite to praye, and mother dowynge, in manne manner therof perfourme, without ony other admunistracyon in rule of anye maner gouernaunce. And they wil haue in hem, and grace to come to such thinges, yet shulde they ceasse eyl their herdes them cleped, although profit and pleasaunce shulde folowe. But trewly other gouernaunce ne other medlinge ought they not to claime, ne yheedes on hem to put. Trewly amonges cosinage dare I not come, but if richesse be my meane, forthy the other bodily goodes maketh nigh cosinage, ther ne euer propinquite ne alyaunce in true was, ne shuld haue be, nere it for her medlig maners, wherfore likely am I not ther legrd. Power of kinred is behynde, richesse suffreth him to passe: truly he saith he commeure of Japheres childre: wherof I am sory yt Japhetes childe for power, a no linage ben rehersed, & Cames childe for ryches be maked Japheres betts. Alas this is a wonder chaunge betweene the two Noes children, sythen that of Japheres offsprynge comeden knyghtes, & of Cayn bilde bed yt lyne of seruage to his brothers childe. Lo honor gentrise and seruage as reson, bothe diffended out of two bretherne of one body: wherfore I say in forbode, that gentrise in kynrede makeh nor gentil lynage in successio, without desert of a manes owen selfe. Lo here is none the lyne of Alysaunder the noble, ne els of Hector of Troye. Whos diffended of myght blode of true to kynge Priamus, ne of Perdicas, whom that kynge Alisaundre made to ben his heir in Grece, was of no kynges blode, his dame was a rombesters. Of what kynred ben the gentiles in our dayes? I trow therfore if any good be in gentrise it is only that it fremeth a maner of nurture be myn to gentylmen, that they shulden not varyen fro the vertues of their auncestres. Certes al maner lynage of mynne ben cum of the in myth, for one father maker of al goodnes entoumed bem al, & al mortall folke of one sede are stemmed. Wherto auaunten of her lynage, in coynage of ye olde fathers. Loke now the growing, and to god maker of mans person there is no clerke mene worthy in gentrise: and he that norisheth his nature with vyces & vnresonable lustes, and leaueth the kynde course, to which ende him brought forthe his brethe, trewly he is ongenerel, and amonge clerkes may ben nempned. And therfore he that wol ben genetil, he more daunten his flesche fro vyces & cansen vngentrynesse, and leaue also tevgnes of wicked lustes, and drawe to him vertue, that in al places genetil-

nesse

nesse gentylmen maketh. And so speake I in femynine gender in generall, of the persones at the request of one, whom euery wight honoureth, for her bountye and her noblesse ymade her to god so dere, ꝑ hys moder she became, and she me hathe had so great in worshyp, that I wil for nothyng in open declare, that in any thynge ayenst her seete maye so wene: For all vertue and all worthynesse of pleasaunce in hem habounden. And although I wolde any thing speke trewly I cannot, I may fynde in quel of hem no maner mater.

Ryght with these wordes the fyrste of that lamentable melodye, and I gaune with a lowly herte to praye, yf that it were lykyng vnto her noble grace, she wolde her deyne to declare me the mater that fyrste was begonne, in whiche she lefte and fyrste to speke before she gaune to synge.

O quod she this is no newe thynge to me, to sene you menne desyren after mater, whiche your selfe caused to voyde.

Ah good lady quod I in whom victorie of strength is proued aboue al other thynge, after the iugement of Eldram, whose lordshyp al lignes: Who is ꝑ ryght as emperour hem cõmaundeth, whether thilke ben not women, in whose humblesse to me ye aperen. For right as man hathe the principalte of al thynge vnder his beynge, in the masculyne gender, and no mo genders ben there but masculyne and femynine, al the remnaunte been no genders but of grace, in facultie of grammer. Ryght so in the femynine, the women holden the vpperest degree of al thynges vnder thilke genre conteyned. Who bryngeth forth kynges, whiche that been lordes of see and of erthe, and al peoples of women ben borne: they norysshe hem that graffen bynes, they maken men comforte in their gladde cheres. Yet sorowe is dethe to mannes herte. Without women the beyng of men were impossyble. They conne with their swetenesse the cruel herte rauyshe and make it meke, buxome, and benigne, without violence meuynge. In beautie of their eyen, or els of other maner fetures is al mens desires, ye more than in golde, precious stones, eyther any ryches se. And in this degree lady your selfe mauye herres of men haue so bounden, that partyre blysse in womankynde to ben men wenen, and in no thynge els. Also lady the goodnesse, the vertue of women, by properte of discrecion, is so wel knowen, by lyghtnesse of reason, that desyre to a good asker by no waye conne they warne: and ye thenne that wolnot passe the kynde werchynge of your seetes by general discrecyon, I wotte wel ye wol so enclyne to my prayere, that grace of my requeste shall fully ben graunted. Certes (qd she thus for the more parte fareth al mankynde to praye, and to crye after womans grace, and fayne many tatales to make herres encline to your desires: and whan these sely women feele of their kynde beleuen your wordes, and wenen al be gospel the promise of your beheestes, than graunt they to you their hertes, and fulfyllen your lustes, wherthrough their liberte in maysterschip that they tofore had is thralled, and so maked souerayne and to be prayd, ꝑ first was seruaunt, and voyce of prayer vsed. Anone as fylled is your luste, many of you be so trewe, that lytel hede take ye of such kyndnesse, but with trayson anon ye thynke hem begyle, and let lyghe of that thyng whiche first ye maked to you wonders dere, so what thyng to women it is to loue any wyght or the hym wel know, and haue him proued in many halfe, for euery glyttering thyng is not golde, and vnder colour of fayre speche many vices may be hyd and counseled. Therfore I rede no wight to truste on you to rathe, mens chere and her speche right grieful is ful ofte, wherfore without good assaye, it is not worthe on many on you to truste: Trewly it is right kyndely to euery man that thynketh women betraye, and shewen outwarde al goodnes, til he haue his wil performed. Lo the birde is begyled with the merry voyce of the foulers whistel. Whan a woman is closed in your nette, than wol ye causes fynden, and beare vnkindnesse her vnbride, or falsete vpon her putte, your owne malyerous trayson with suche thynge to excuse. Lo than han women non other wreche in vengeaunce, but blodder and wepe tyl hem lyst thynke, and sorily her mishap complayne, and is put in to weyning that al men been so vntrewe. Lo how often haue men chaunged her loue in a lytel while, or els for fayling their wyl in their places hem sette: for trewthyp shal be one, and same with another hym lyst for to haue, and al for delyte, or els were he lost born in packe and in clothes: is this fayre, nay god wote I may nat tel by thousand partes, the wronges and cheryes of suche false people, for make they me

ne:

uer so good a bōde, al set ye at a myte whan your herr tourneth: And they that wenen for sorowe of your dey, the pitt of your falsē herr is flowe out of towne. Alas therefore, ȳ euer any woman wolde take anye wyghte in her grace, tyl she knowe at the ful on whome she might at al assayes trust. Cōme con no more sratte in queynte knowynge, to vnderstande the falsē dissemuable comectementes of mannes begilynges. Lo how it fareth, though ye men gronen and cryē, certes it is but disceit, and that prouerth wel by thēdes in your werkynge. Howe many women haue bene lorne, and with shame foule shent by longe lastyn getynne, whiche thorowe mennes gyle haue ben disceyued euer their fame shal dure, and their bedes radde and song in many londes, that they han done recouren shal they neuer, but alway ben demed lightly, in such plyte a yen shulde they fal, of whiche slaunders and tenes ye falsē men and wicked bene the very causes, on you by ryght ought these shames and these reprowes all holy discende. Thus arne ye al nyghe vnfrewe, for al youre fayre spechē your herte is full fyckell. What cause han ye women to dispise better frute than they bene, ne swetter spices to youre behoue mowe ye not fynde, as farre as worldly bodyes stretchen. Loke to their formynge at the makyng of their persones by god in loye of paradice, for goodnesse of mans propre body were they maked, after the sawes of ȳ bible, rehersing goddes wordes in this wise: It is good to mankynde that we make to hym an helper. Lo in paradyse for youre helpe was this tree grafted, out of whiche all lynage of man dyscendeth: yf a man be noble frute, of noble frute it is sprongen: the blysse of paradise to mennes sory herres, yet in this tree a bydeth. O noble helpes ben these trees, and gētilewel to ben worshypped of euery good creature: ye that hem anoieth doth his owne shame, it is a comfortable perle at eult al tenes. Euery company is myrthed by their present being. Trewly I wil neuer bertue, but a woman were therof ȳ rote. What is heuen the worse though sarayns on it lie? Is youre fayre vnfrewe thenghe rennogates maken theron leasynges. If the fyre doth any wighte brenne, blame his owne wytte that put hym selfe so farre in the heate. Is not fyre worthyl leit and most element comfortable amongs all other? fyre is chefe werker in fostryng sustenaunce to mankynde: shall fire bene blamed for it bred a foole naturelly, by his own faulty wytte in steryng. Ah wicked folkes, for your propre malyce, and shrewdnesse of your selfe ye blame and dispyse the precious thynge of your kynde, and whiche thinges amonge other most ye despyen. Trewly Nero and his children ben shrewes, that dispise their dames. The wickednesse and gilyng of men, in disclaudring of the like that most hath ben gladed and pleased, were impossible to write or to nempne. Neuer later yet I say he that knoweth a way, may it lightly passe eke an herbe proued may safely to smertage sores ben layde: So I say, in him that is proued is nothyng such rucls to gesse. But these thynges haue I rehersed to warne you women al at ones, that to lightly without good assaye ye assenten not to mannes speche. The sonne tarthe day lyght, is to knowen from the moone that shyneth in the nyghte. Wende to the thy selfe quod he as I haue of sayd. I knowe wel thyne herte, thou arte none of all the forsayd nempned people, for I knowe wel the countynuance of thy semuer, that sythen I set the a werke, impaire thy shrewtyte for pleasaūce, frendshyp, or fauoures of none other, be impayre moued from thyne herte, wherfore into myne houshold beleue I wol that thou entre, and al the portrayture of my werkyng make it be knowen vnderstandynge, as one of my priuy seruiteres. Thou desyrest of the fame to here of the thynges there I left, ye forsothe ȳ I that were to me a great blysse, from oblyuion for thou shalt nor wene that womans condicions for layre speche suche thyng belongen.

Tyou shalte gone the vnderstande frō amonge all other thynges, that al the cure of my seruice to me in the purtrayture in doyng is desyred in euery mannes herte. Be he neuer so moche a wretche, but cuy man trauayleth by diuers shadye, and seke diuerse bisse by diuers wayes, but al the endes are knyt in seluenesse of desyre in ȳ pertye bisse, that is suche loye, whan men it haue gotten, there lyueth no thyng more to ben couered: but howe that desyre of suche perfection in my seruice be kyndely set flowers herres, yet ben erroures opinions inflamme it by falsenesse of wenynge. And although mennes vnderstandyng be mistorned, to knowe whiche

shuld ben the way vnto my person, and whyther it abydeth: yet wote they there is a loue in euery wight, wenyth by that thing ỳ he coueyteth moste, he shulde come to thilke loue, and that is parfyte blysse of my seruauntes, but than fulle blysse may not be, and there lacke any thynge of that blysse in any syde. Eke it folowyth than, that he that must haue ful blysse, lacke no blysse in loue on no syde.

Therfore lady quod I tho thylke blysse I haue desyred, and sothe to seme this my selfe by wayes of riches, of dignite, of power, and of renomé, wenyng me in tho thinges had bē thilke blysse, but ayenst the herte it turneth. Whan I supposed best thylke blisse haue get and come to the ful purpose of your seruyce, sodaynly was I hindred, and throwen so fer abacke, ỳ me thynketh an impossyble to come there I lette. I wot wel quod she and therfore hast thou fayled, for thou wentest not by the hye way: a lytel misgoyng in the gynning causeth mykel errour in the end, wherfore of thilke blysse thou fayledest for haunge of tychesse, ne non of the other thinges thou nēpnedest, mowē not make such perfite blis i loue as I shal shew. Therfore they be not worthy to thylke blysse, & yet somwhat must bē cause and way to thylke blysse: Ergo there is some suche thing & some way, but it is lytel i vsage and that is not openly knowe. But what felest in thine herte of ỳ seruyce, in which by me thou art entred: wenest aught thy self yet be in the hye way to my blysse? I shal so shew it to the, thou shalte nat con say the contrary.

Good lady qō I altho I suppose it in my herte, yet wolde I here thin wordes, how ye meanen in this mater. Qō she that I shall with my good wyl. Thilke blysse desired, for deale ye knowen, altho it be nat parfitly, for kyndly entention leadeth you therto, but i thre manet lyuynges is all suche wayes shewed. Euery wight in this world to haue this blis one of thilke thre wayes of lyues must procede, which after opinios of great clerkes arne by names cleaped, bestiallich, resonablich, is vertuous: manlych is worldlich, bestiallyche is lustes & delytable, nothynge restrayned by bridel of reason, al that loyeth & yeueth glad nesse to the herte, and it be ayenst reason, is likened to bestiall lyuyng, whiche thinge folowyth lustes & delytes, wherfore in such thing may not ỳ precious blysse that is maister of all vertues abyde. Your fathers to forne you haue cleped such lusty lyuynges after ỳ flesche passions of desyre, which are innominable to fore god & mā both. Thā after determinaciō of suche wyse, we accorden that suche passiōs of desyre shul not be nempned, but holden for absolute from al other liuiges & prouinges, and so lyueth in to lyuynges, manlich & resonable to declare the maters begonne. But to make ỳ fully haue vnderstādyng in mālyche lyuynges, which is holden worldlich in these thinges, so that ignorance be made no letter. I wol (qō she) nēpne these forsayd wayes by names & cōclusions. First riches, dignite, renome, & power, shul in this worke be cleaped bodily goodes, for in hē hath bē a gret throw mānes trust of selynesse in loue, as in riches, sufficsance to haue maintayned that was begon, by worldly catel in dignite, honour, & reuerence of hem that werne vnderput by maistry therby to obey. In renome glory of peoples praising, after lustes in their herte, without hede taking to qualite & maner of doing, and in power, by trouth of lordships maintenaunce, thing to procede forth in doynge. In al which thinges a longe tyme mānes couetise in cōmune hath ben greatly groūded, to come to ỳ blis of my seruice, but trewly they were begyled, & for the principal must nedes fayle & in helpyng mowe nat auaile. Se why for holdest hi not pore ỳ is nedy? Yes parde (qō I.) And him for dishonored that muche folke deyne not to reuerēce. That is soth qō I & what him ỳ his mightes faylen & mowe not helpen. Certes (qō I) me semeth of al mē he shuld be holden a wretch. And wenest not (qō she) that he that is lytel in renome, but rather is oute of the praysynges of mo mē than a fewe be nat in shame? For sothe (qō I) it is shame & villany to him that coueyteth renōt, that more folk not prayse in name thā preise. Soth (qō she) ỳ saist sothe, but al these thynges are folowed of suche maner doynge, and wenden in riches sufficsaūce, in power might, in dignyte worship, & in renome glory, wherfore they discēded in to discеyuable wenyng, & in ỳ seruice discrete is folowed. And thus in general thou & al suche other that so worthē faylen of my blysse that ye long han desyred, wherfore truly i life of reason is the hie way to this blysse, as I thynke more openly to declare herafter. Neuer the later, yet in a lytell to cōforte thy hert, in shewyng of what way thou arte entred thy selfe, & that thy

rite may know the set in the hye way, I woll enforme the in this wise. Thou hast fayled of thy first purpose, bicause thou wentest wrong and leftest the hye waye on thy right syde, as thus, thou lokedest on worldy lyuinge & that thyng ỹ begyled, & lightly therfore as a liell assay thou songedest, but whan I turned thy purpose, & shewed the a parte of the hye way tho thou abode therein, and no dethe ne feerdnesse of non enemy might ỹ out of thilk way reue, but euer one in thyn hert, to come to the like blysse whan thou were areested and fyrst tyme cuptsoned, thou wer loth to chaunge thy way, for in thy hert thou wendest to haue be there thou shuldest, & for I had routhe to sen the myscaried, & wyll well thyn ableneesse my seruyce to forther & encrease, I come my self without other meane to visyt thy person, in to forte of thy hert: & perdy in my comyng ỹ wer greatly gladed, after which tyme, no disease, no care, no trene, mist moue me out of thy hert And yet am I glad & greatlye cupted, howe continually thou haddest me in mynde, wyth good auysement of thy conscience, whan thy big & his princes by huge wordes & great, lo ked after variaunce in thy spech, & euer thou were redy for my sake in plesaunce of ỹ Bargarite peerle, and many mo other, thy body to obiyge in to Barces doyng, if any cõtraried thy lawes, stedfast way maketh stedfast hert, with good hope in the ende. Trewly I wol that thou it wel knowe, for I se the so set and not chaungynge herte haddest in my seruyce, and I made thou haddest grace of thy kyng, in forgyuenes of myself myscrede: to the gracious kyng arte thou myself holden, of whole grace & goodnesse sometyme heraftet I thinke the enforme, whan I shew the ground where as morall vertue groweth. Who broughte ỹ to werke & Who brought this grace about & Who made thy hert hardy & Trewly it was I, for haddest ỹ of me fayled, than of thys purpose had neuer taken in this wyse. And therfore I say thou myght wel trust to come to thy blysse, sythen thy gyuynge hathe bene hard, but euer graciously after thy hertes desyre hath proceded. Siluer fyned with many heates men knowen for trew, and safely me may trust to the alay in werkynge. This diseases hath proued what way hente forward thou thynkest to holde. Howe in good fayth lady (quod I tho) I am nowe in, me semeth it is the hye way and the ryghte. Ye forsothe (quod she) and now I wol disproue thy first wayes, by whiche many men wenen to gette thilke blysse. But for as moche as euery hert that hath cauzt ful loue, is tred with queyne knottinges, ỹ, ou shalt vnderstande that loue and thilke forsaid blisse to come declared in this prouinces, hath hore the knot in the hert. Wel quod I this impossibilitie I wol well vnderstande. Howe also qd she for the knotte in the herte, nulle ben fromed me to an other, and I knowe thy desyre: I wol, thou vnderstande these maters to ben said of myself in disprouynge of thy furste sentence, & in strengthynge of thilke that thou haste vnderstande to thy Margarite perle. A goddes halfe qd I tryght wel I fele that al this eafe is possible and trewe and therfore I admytted also the ther. Vnderstande wel qd she these termes, & and loke no contradyction thou graunte.

If god wol qd I of all these thynges wyll I not fayle, and if I graunte contradiction, I shulde graunte an impossible, and that were a foule inconuenience for whom thynges lasse dye ỹ wis I ratter I tremble me to helpe.

Well qd she thou hasted ỹ sayde thyng is a cause wherfore a thynge hath beynge as it is sed that if riches cause knotte hert, thilk riches arne cause of thilk precious thyng: but after ỹ sentence of Aristotle, euery cause is more in dignite than his thyng caused, wherthrough it folowith riches to ben more in dignite than thilke knot, but riches arne kyndely naughty, badde, and nedy, and thilke knotte is thynge kyndely good, wele prayed and delyred: Ergo thynge naughty, badde, and nedy in kyndely vnderstandynge is more worthy than thynge kyndely good, wele delyred and prayed: the consequence is false, nedes the antecedent mote ben of the same condition. But that riches ben bad, naughty, and nedy, that wol I proue, wherfore they mowe cause no suche thyng, that is so glorious and good: The more riches thou hast, the more nede hast thou of helpe hem to kepe. Ergo thou nedest in ryches, wherfore nede thou shuldest not haue if thou hem wantest. Than mulle richesse ben nedye, that in ther haunsa maken ỹ nedy to helpes in sure te thy richesse to kepen, wherthrough folowith ryches to ben nedy. Euery thyng caus-

fyng ryches is badde & naughty: but rychesse in one cause mischefe, in another they mowen not euenly stretche al about. Wherof cometh plee, debate, theft, begylinges, but richesse to wynne, whiche thinges bene bad, and by rychesse arne caused: Ergo thilke richesse bene badde, whiche badnesse and nede ben knyt in to rychesse by a maner of kyndely properte, and euery cause and caused accorden, so that it foloweth thilke richesse to haue þ same accordaunce with badnesse and nede, that their cause asketh. Also euery thynge hath his being by his cause, that if þ cause be distroyed, the beynge of caused is vanysshed: And so yf rychesse causen loue, and rychesse werein destroyed, the loue shulde vanysshe, but thilke knotte and it be euer mar nat vanysshe for no going of no rychesse: Ergo rychesse is no cause of the knot. And many men as I sayde, feynen the cause of the knot in rychesse, thilke knytten the richesse, and nothynge the yuell: thilke persons what euer they bene, whom ryches is most worthy to be had, & that make their cause so wene they thylke riches be better than the person. Comenly suche aske rather after the quantite than after the qualite, and suche women as wel by hem selfe as by other, that conuenction of his lyfe and of his soules is no more precious, but as inkel as be hathe of richesse. Alas howe maye be holden suche thinges precious or noble that neyther han in hem soule, ne ordynaunce of welle thinges in hem: for the richesse bynmore worthe when they ben in gathering, than in departing. Gaynerth his loue of other men pray sing. And auarice gathering maketh be hated and nedy to many out beynes: And whan leueth the possession of suche goodes, & they ryme bam the, than entreth sorowe and trete in their hertes. O badde & thraue bene thilke that at their departinge maketh men trouble and sory, and in the gathering of hem make men nedy: Moche folke at ones wolden not togyder moche therof haue & goodly glad deth by his hosse and all his meyne, but he is a badde gest that maketh his hoste nedy, & to be aferde of his gestes goynge. Certes qd I me wondreth therfore that the comune opinion is thus: he is worth no more than that he hath in cofell. O qd he loke thou be not of that opinion, for yf golde or money, or other maner of riches shynen in the sight, to hose is that nat thinke, & tho they haue a lytel beautie, they be nothing in cõparison of our kynde, & therfore ye shulde nat set your worthinesse in thing lower than your selfe, for the ryches, & fairnesse, the worthynesse of thilke goodes, if ther be any such preciousnesse in hem are nat thyn, thou madest hem so neuer, frome other they come to the, & to other they shull fro the: wherfore enbraced þ other wightes goodes as tho they were thin: kynde hath drawn hem by hem selfe. It is sothe the goodes of erth ben ordayned in your fode & nourishynge, but if thou wolt hold the apaide with that sufficeth to thy kynde thou shalt nat be in danger of no such riches, for kynde sufficeth lytel thing who that taketh hede. And if thou wolt algates wt superfluite of riches be a throted, & shalt hastely be anoyed, or els yuell at ease. And fairnesse of feldes ne of habytacions, ne multytude of meyne, mave nat be reckened as riches that are thyn owne, for if they be bad it is great sclaunder & villany to the ocupier, and if they be good or faire, the merite of the workeman that hem made is to prayse, & on shulde otherwise bounte be copred for the, thilke goodnesse & fairnesse be proper to the thinges hem selfe, thaf if they be not thin for ow nat whan they wend, ne glad the not in pope and i pride wha thou hem hast, for their bounte & their beautes cometh out of their owne kynde & not of thyn owen person. as faire bee thes in their not hauing as whan thou hast hem, they be of faire for thou hast hem, but thou hast geten hem for the fairnesse of them selfe. And there þ balance of men is demed in riches ourforth, wene me to haue no proper good in the selfe, but fecche it in straunge thinges. Certes the coueitise of good wenyng is vnþ inflourned to wepe your nobleness be not in your selfe, but in the goodes & beaute of other thinges. Loke by the beestes þ han but felyng soules, haue sufficiaunce in their owne selfe: & ye that ben lyke to god, seken encrease of sufficiaunce frome so excellent a kynde of so lowe thinges, ye do great wrong to him that you made lorde ouer al erthly thinges, & ye put your worthynesse vnder the nobte of the fee of lowe thynges & foule, whan ye iudge thilke riches to be your worthinesse, than put ye your selfe by estimacio vnder thilke foule thinges, & than loue ye the knowyng of your self to be ye biter than any bombe beest, that cometh of thexcuse bree knight so thylke persons that louen non yuel for bere worthynes

of the

of the person,but for straūge goodes, & saith the adornement in the knot lyth in such thig, his errour is perilous & shrewde, & he wryeth moche venym with moche welth, & that knot may not be good whan he hath it getten.

Certes thus hath riches with flyckering fist anoyed many: & often whan there is a throw out throwe, he coyneth al the golde, al the precious stones that mowen be founden to haue in this bandon, he weneth no wyst be worthye to haue suche thinges but he alone. How many hast thou knowe nowe in late tyme, that in their tyckelle supposed sufficiance haue followed, & nowe it is al fayled. Ye lady (qō I) that is for mysse medling, and otherwise governed thy like tyckelle than they shoulde. Ye (qō she) tho had not the floode greatly arrysed, and throwe to hem warde both grauel & sande, he had made no medlynge. And ryght as fre reuerth floode, so draweth fee ebbe, and pulleth ayen vnder wawe all the fylthe out throwe, but if good pyles of noble gouernice in loue, in well meenynge manet, bene fadly grounded, to whiche holde thike grauell as for a whyle, that ayen lyghtly mowe not turne: and if the pyles ben trewe, the grauell and sande wol abyde. And certes full warnyng in loue shalte thou neuer throwe hem gre ne couet, that lyghtly with ebbe or flight be wate at wol ayen meue. In tyckelle manere haue had kynges and duraces, which they shulde not haue had if therof they had failed. Therfore whiche now declared partely it is lefte, that for tyckelle shulde the knotte in herte neyther bene caused in one ne in other: truely knotte may ben knytte, and throwe more stedfast in loue though tyckelle failed, and els in tyckelle is the knotte not in herte. And than suche a knotte is falle, whan the lefte rubbeth & vnbrayeth the grauel, that false tyckelle boydeth, thilke knotte wol vnbynde. Wherfore no trust no way, no cause, no parfyte beynge is in tyckelle of no suche knotte, therfore another way must we haue.

HOnoure in dignite is wonde to reuerence ful knotte. Ye certes qō I and of that opinyon ben many, for they sayne dignyte, with honour, and reuerence, can ben heres to eucheymen, and to abled to be knyt togyther, for ꝑ excellence in louerayne of such degrees.

Howe qō the yt dignite, honour, and reuerence couldē thilke knot in herte, this knot is good and profitable. For euery cause of a cause, is cause of thyng caused: Than thus, good thynges and profitable ben by dignite, honour, and reuerence caused. Ergo they accorden, and dignytes ben good with reuerences and honour, but contraryes mowen not accorden: Wherfore by reason there shuld no dignitee, no reuerence, none honoure accorde with tyckelle, but that is falsly they haue ben cause to throwe in many chambres, for in hem they accorden. Ergo from begynnyng to argue ayen parde yl come to the laste conclusion, they are not cause of the knot. Lo al day at eye, ame throwes not in reuerence, in honour, and in dignyte-res forsothe, rather than ꝑ good Than is it lykelyer that throwes rather than good shul ben cause of this knot. But of this contrary of al loures is prouerd, and for a sothe openly determyned to holden

Nowe quod I fayne wolde I here howe suche dignytees accorden with throwes.

O qō she that wel I shewen shalle be wyse. Ye wene good be ꝑ dignytes of the here in yoube erre is as the fowle of the bryght with houren and cloude lyghtly ryse whan they comen in the blase of vnkouth traumes, they comen much harme & woute arrayne thereof many a well fayre knyght bremde al a fyere. Certes in dignytes of fre the wethes of the comyns ꝑ ofte maner and the dabelle more prese, for there rather ryseth maystrie and moche people shamen. Ofte tymes ryse rowtes for maner of the dignytes, and ofte maintened ꝑ the myghtyer, and ofte caused be sayd, rumours, and ofte by such wone, by such thinges haue ben dignytes made wrong vnder lordshyp of ryght vnryghtwise thinges. Thus wrong dignytes mowe Ye quod I wrecche ar dignytes thinge in wrong dignite changed, and ayen good ryght in dignite changed, and ayen good ryght in dignite changed, and ayen good ryght in

who is worthy worshyp for such goodnesse not dignite, but person ꝑ make the goodnesse in dignite to shyne. This is wonder thynge (qꝺ I) for me thinketh, as the person in dignite is worthy honour for goodnesse, so tho a person for badnesse magre hath deserued, yet the dignite leneth to be cõmended. Let be qꝺ she thou errest right foule, dignite with badnes is holpen to performe ꝑ felonous doyng: pardy were it kidly good or any properte of kyndely vertue hadden in hem selfe, shrewes shulde hem neuer haue, with hem shuld they neuer accord. Water & fire that bē contrarious mowen not togider ben assembled, kind wol nat suffre such cõtraries to joyn. And sythen at eye by experiẽce in doyng, we sen that shrewes haue hem more oftē than good mē, lyker mayst thou be, that kyndly goodin such thiges is not appropred. Pardy wer they kindly good, as wel one as other shuldē euē lych in vertue of gouernaūce ben worth: but one fayleth in goodnes another doth the contrary, & so it sheweth kyndly goodnes in dignite not be grouded. And this same reason (qꝺ she) may be made in general on all the bodily goodes, for they comen oft to throw out shrewes. After this he is strōg that hath mizt to haue great burthyns, & he is light & swift that hath soueraunte in rōning to passe other right so he is a shrew on whom shrewde things & bad han most werching. And right as philosophie maketh philosophers, & my seruice maketh lovers: right so if dignites weren good or vertuous, they shuld makē shrewes good, & turne her malyce & make hem be vertuous, but ꝑ do they nat, as it is proued, but cause rācour & debate. Ergo they be nat good but utterly bad. Had Nero neuer bene Emperour, shulde neuer his dame haue be slayn, to makē open the priuite of his engendrure. Herodes for his dignite slewe manye children. The dignite of kig John wold haue distroyed al Englāde. Therfore mokel wisedom & goodnes both, neden in a person, the malyce in dignite slyly to bridell, & with a good bryt of arest to withdraw in case it wold praūce otherwise than it shuld: truely ye yeue to dignites wrōgful names i your clepyng. They shulde here nat dygnyte, but monstre of badnesse & mayntenour of shrewes. Pardy shyne the sonne neuer so bright, & it bring forth no fruite, ne seasonably the herbes out bryng of ꝑ erthe, but suffre frostes & cold, & the erth bayne to lygge by tyme of his compas in eyre enuie about, ye wold wonder & dispreise that son. Ꝑ the Mone be at ful & sheweth no lyzt but derke & dymme to your syght appereth, & make distruction of ꝑ waters, wol ye not suppose it be under cloud or in clips & that some preuy thing vnknowē to your wittes, is cause of suche contrarious doynge. Than if clerkes that han ful insyght & knowing of suche impedimentes enforme you of ꝑ sothe, bery thiottes ye ben, but if ye yeuē credēce to thilk clerkes wordes. And yet it doth me tene, to sen many wrecches reioycen in suche maner planettes. Truely lyte cō they on philosopye or els on my lore, ꝑ any desyre haue such highe tyng planettes in ꝑ wyse any more to shewe. Good lady (qꝺ I) tel ye me howe ye mean in these thynges. Lo qꝺ she ꝑ dignites of your cyte, Sonne & Mone, nothyng in kynd shew their shynyng as they shulde. For the Sonne made no brēnyng here in loue, but freesed denye in mēnes herres for feblenesse of shyning here: & the Moone was about vnder an olde cloude, the lyuenges by waters to dystroye.

Lady (qꝺ I) it is supposed they had shyned as they shuld. Ye qꝺ she but nowe it is proued at the ful their beaute in kyndly shynyng fayled, wherfore dignyte of hym selfen hath no beautte in fairnesse, ne dyrueth nat awaye vices but encreaseth, & so be they no cause of the knotte. Nowe se in good trouth, hold ye nat such sonnes worthy of no reuerēce & dignites, worthy of no worshyp, ꝑ maketh men to do the more harmes. I not (qꝺ I). No qꝺ she & thou se a wise good man, for his goodnesse & wysenesse wolde thou nat do him worshyp. Therof he is worthy. That is good skil (qꝺ I) it is dewe to suche, both reuerēce and worshyp to haue. Than qꝺ she a shrewe for his shrewdnesse, altho he be put forth to some other for ferde, yet is he worthy for shrewdnesse to be vnworshipped: of reuerēce no part is he worthy to haue, to cōtrarious doing belōgeth & that is good skil. For right as he bemyrcth ꝑ dignities, thilke same thyng ayenwarde him myrcth, or els shulde myrke. And ouer this thou wotte wel quod she that fire in euery place heateth where it be, and water maketh wete: Why for kyndely werkyng is so yput in hem to do suche thynges: for euery kyndely in werkyng sheweth his kynde. But though a wight had ben mayre of your cyte many winter togyder, and come in a straūge

place

place there he were not knowen, he shulde for his dignite haue no reuerence. Than neyther worshyppe ne reuerence is kyndely proper to no dignite, sythen they shulden don their kynde, in suche doynge yf any were. And yf reuerence ne worshyppe kyndely be not set in dignites, and they more therin ben shewed than goodnesse, for that in dignyte is shewed but it proueth that goodnesse kyndely in hem is not grounded. Iwys neyther worshyppe ne reuerence ne goodnesse in dignyte, done none office of kynde, for they haue none suche proprete in nature of doynge, but by false opynyon of the people. Lo howe sometyme thylke that in your eyte werne in dignite noble, yf thou lyste hem nempne, they ben nowe ouerturned, bothe in worshyp, in name, and in reuerence: wherfore such dignytes haue no kind ywrethyng of worshyppe and of reuerence, he that hath no worthynesse on it selfe. Nowe it ryseth and nowe it vanysheth after the vayraunt opynyon in false hertes of vnstable people. Wherfore yf thou desyre the knotte of this tewel, or els yf thou woldest suppose she shulde serre the knotte on the for suche maner dignite, thanne thou wenest beaute or goodnesse of thilke somwhat encreaseth the goodnesse or vertue in the bodye: But dignite of hem selfe ben not good, ne yeuen reuerence ne worshyppe by their own kynde, howe shulde they than yeue to any other a thynge, that by no way mowe they haue hem selfe. It is sene in dignite of the emperour and of many mo other, that they mowe nat of hem selue kepe their worshyppe ne their reuerence, that that malyced whyle it is nowe vp a nowe downe, by vnstedfaste hertes of the people. What bountie mowe they yeue ỹ with cloude lyght lyeueth hys shynynge. Certes to the occupier is mokell apeyred, sythen suche doynge dothe villanye to hym that may it not maynteyne, wherfore thylke waye to the knotte is stoked: and yf any desyre to come to the knot, he muste leaue thys way on his lefte syde, or els shal he neuer come there.

Auayleth aught quod the power of mizt in mayntenaunce of worthy to come to this knot. Pardee quod I ye, for herres ben rauysshed from such maner thynges. Certes quod she thoughe a fooles hert is with thyng rauysshed, yet therfore is no generall cause of ỹ powers, ne of a ther partyte hert to be loked after. Was not Nero the most shrewe one of thylke that men rede, & yet had he power to make senatours iustyces, and prynces of many landes. Was not that great power. Yes certes quod I. Wel quod she yet might he not helpe him selfe out diseale, whanne gan fall. Howe manye ensamples canste thou remembre of kynges great and noble, and huge power holden, and yet they might not kepe hem selue from the dnelle. Howe wrecched was kinge Henry Curmaunt yet he drede, he had not so muche as to couer with hys membres: and yet was he one of the greatest kynges of all the Normandes offspring, and moste possessyon had. O, a noble thynge and clere is power, that is not founden mighty to kepe hym selfe. Certes trewly a great foole is he, that for such thyng wolde serre the knotte in thyne hert. The power of realmes is not thylke greatest power amonges the worldly powers reckned. And yf suche powers han wretchednesse in hem selfe, it foloweth other powers of erthe somdyeron to ben wrecched, and than that wretchydnesse shulde ben cause of suche a knotte. But euery wyght that hath reason in mynde that wretchydnesse by no way may ben cause of none suche knotte, wherfore suche power is no cause. That powers haue wretchednesse in hem selfe, may ye ryght inough vnderstonded. If power lacke on any syde, on that syde is no power, but no power is wretchednesse: for al be it so the power of emperours or kynges, or els of their realmes be lyke the power of the prynce therfore he and brode, yet beyndes is there moche he he hathe no comaundynge he lacketh & there as lacketh his power, his nolyte encreth, where vnder ỹ reigne that maketh hem wretches. Power is wretchednesse and nothyng elis: but in thys maner hath ges more portion of wretchednesse than of power. Trewly suche powers ben vnmyghty, for euer they ben in drede how erthly power to losing may be kyped of for me, for drede to tily pryches euer i their herte. power whiche eareth and feedeth it selfe to mayntayne. Almyghty is that wretchednesse whiche is entred by the feedfull wemmyng of the wretche hym selfe: and knowyng of wretchednesse is betwene wretches, and wretches al thyng bewayleu: wherfore the knot shulde be bewayled, and there is no suche partyte thylke that we supposed ay wynnyng. Ergo

powet in nothing shulde cause suche knottes. Wretchydnesse is a kyndly properte in such power, as by way of drede, which they mow not eschewe me by no way lyue in sykernesse. For thou woste well (quod she) he is nought mighty that wolde done that he may not don ne performe. Therfore (quod I) these kynges and lordes that han sufficiaunce at the ful of men and other thynges, mowen well ben holden mighty: their commaundementes ben done, it is neuermore denyed. Foole (quod she) or he wot hym selfe myghty or wotte it not: for he is nought mighty, that is blinde of his myght and wotte it not. That is soth (quod I) Than yf he wot it, he must nedes ben a drade to lesen it. He that wotte of hys myght is in doute that he mote nedes lese, and so leadeth him drede to ben vnmyghty. And if he recche not to lese, lytel is that worthe that of the lesyng reason recheth nothinge: and if it were mizty in power or in strength, ỳ lesyng shulde ben withsete, and what it cometh to the lesing he may it not withsitte. Ergo thilke might is feude and naughty. Such mightes arn ylike to postes and pylers that vpryght stonden, and great might han to beare many charges, and yf they croke on anye syde, lytell thynge maketh hem ouerthrow. Thys is a good ensample quod I to pylers and postes that I haue sene ouerthrowed my selfe, and hadden they ben vnderput with any helpes, they had not so lyghtly fall. Than holdest thou hym mighty that hath many men armed and many fernaunces, and euer he is adradde of hem in his herte, and for he gaffeth hem, somtyme he mote the more feare haue. Comely he that other agaffeth, other in hym ayenwarde wer then the same: and thus warnyshed mote he be, and of warnyshe the houte drede: Lytel is that might & right feude, who so taketh hede. Than semeth it quod I that suche famulers aboute kynges and great lordes, shuld great myght haue. Although a syphet in augrym haue no myght in signifycacion of it selue, yet he reueth power in signifycacion to other, and these clepe I the helpes to a post to kepe him from fallynge. Certes quod she thylke skylles ben feude. Why but if the shores ben wel grouded, the helpes shullen slyden and suffre the charge to fall, her myght lytel auayleth. And so me thynketh quod I that a poste alone stondyng vpryght vpon a basse, may lenger in great burthen endure, than croked pylers for al their helpes, & her grounde be not syker. That is sothe (quod she) for as the blynde in bearyng of the lame gynne stomble, bothe shuld fal, ryght so suche pylers so enuyroned with helpes in falyng of the grounde, fayleth al togyder, howe ofte than suche famulers in their most pride of prosperite ben sodainly ouerthrowen. Thou hast knowe manye in a moment so ferre ouerthrowe, ỳ couer might they neuer, whan the heuyneſſe of suche fayllynge cometh by cas of fortune, they mow it not eschewe: & myght & power, if ther were any, shuld of strength suche thynges voyde & weyue, & so it is not. Lo than which thing is this power, ỳ tho men han it they ben agast, & in no tyme of ful hauig be they siker: & if they wold weyue drede, as they mow not, lytel is worthnes. Fye therfore on so noughty thing any knot to cause. Lo i aduertise, thilk be his foes ỳ glosed & semed frends i welth: thus arn his famyliers his foes and his enemyes: And nothing is werse ne more mighty for to anoy than is a famylier enemye, and these thinges may they not weyue: so trewly their mights not worthe a cresse. And ouer al thynge he that may not withdrawe the brydell of hys fleshly lustes and his wretched complaynutes (nowe thynke on thy selfe) trewlye he is not mighty: I can sene no waye that ly the to the knotte. Thylke people than that setten their hertes vpon such mightes and powers, often be begyled. Parde he is not mighty that may do any thynge, that another may doone hym the selue, and that men haue as great power ouer hym as he ouer other. Antistye that demeth men, ayenward hath ben often deqed. Busyris slewe hys gestes, and he was slayne of Hercules his geste. Tyges betrayshed many menne, and of Collo was he betrayed. He that with swerde smyteth, with swerd shalbe smytten. Than gan I to studyen a whyle on these thinges, and made a countenaunce with my hande in maner to ben huyshte. Now let sene (quod she) me thynketh somwhat there is within thy soule, that troubleth thy vnderstandynge, saye on what it is. (Quod I tho) me thynketh that although a man by power haue suche myght ouer me, as I haue ouer other, that disprouethe no might in my person, but yet may I haue power and myght neuer the later. Se nowe (quod she) thyne owne feudenesse: he is mighty that may without wretchednesse, and he is vnmyghty that may

it no

it not withstytte: but than he that might ouer
the, and he wol put on the wretchidnes, thou
myght it not withstytte. Ergo thou seest thy
selfe what followeth. But nowe quod she
woldest thou not skorne a thou se a flye han
power to don harme to an other flye, a thylke
haue no myght ne aventuryng hym selfe to
defende. Yes certes quod I. Who is a fray-
ter thynge quod she than the fleshly body of
a man, ouer whiche haue often tyme flyes,
and yet lasse thynge than a flye, mokel myght
in greuaunce and anoyenge withouten ame
withstryving, for al thylke mannes myghtes.
And sythen thou seest thyne fleshely body in
kyndely power fayle, howe shulde than the
accydent of a thyng ben in more surete of be-
yngе than substancial: Wherfore thylke thyn
ges that we clepe power, is but accident to y
fleshly body, and so they haue not haue that
surete in myght, whiche wanteth in the sub-
staneyal body. Why there is no wayе to the
knotte, that loketh aryght after the hye way
as he shulde.

VErely it is proued that rychesse, dyg-
nyte, and power, been not trewe wayе
to the knotte, but as rathe by suche thynges
the knotte to be vnbound: Wherfore on these
thynges I rede no wyght trust, to gette anye
good knotte. But what shulde we saye of re-
nome in the peoples mouthes, shuld that ben
any cause: what supposest thou in thyn herte
Certes quod I yes I trowe, for your flye
resons I dare not safely it saye. Than quod
she wol I proue that shrewes as rathe shul
ben in the knotte as the good, and that were
avenst kynde. Sayne quod I wolde I that
here, me thinketh wonder how renome shuld
as wel knytte a shrewe as a good persone re-
nome in euery degre hath auaunced, yet wyll
I neuer the contrarye: shulde than renome ac
corde with a shrewe it may not synke in my
stomake tyll I here more. Howe quod she
haue I not sayd alwayes y shrewes shul not
haue the knotte. What nedeth quod I to re
herse y anye more, I wotte wel euery wyght
by kyndely reason, shrewes in knyttinge wol
eschewe. Than qd she the good ought thilke
knotte to haue. Howe els quod I. It were
great harme quod she that the good were
weyued and put out of espoire of the knot, yt
be it desyred. O qd I alas, ou suche thynge
to thinke I were that heue weyeth to ie such
wronges here ben suffred on erthe: the good
ought it to haue and no wight els. The good
nesse qd she of a person maye not ben knowe
outforth, but by renome of y knowers, wher
fore he must be renomed of goodnesse to come
to y knot. So muste it be qd I or els al lost
that we carpen. Sothly qd she y were great
harme, but if a good man might shewe his de-
syres in seruice of thilk knot, a shrewe to be
serued, a they ben not knowen in general but
by lacking and praysing and renome, and
so by the consequence it followeth, a shrewe
ben prayesed and knyt, a good to be forsake
and vnknyt. Ah qd I tho haue I ofte ben
here aboute, yet wolde I fayn of one
argumets better declare, howe good and bad
do acorden by lacking and prayesing, me thin
keth it avenst kynde. Leue quod she and that
shalt thou se as verne: these elementes a han
trarious qualytes in kynde, by whiche they
mowe not accorde no more than good and bad
a in qualytes they accorde, so that elementes
by qualyte, accordeth qualyte. Ye for erthe
drie, and water y is nere and by nature erthe
is were: drie and were ben contrary and may
not acorde, and yet thise dissordaunces be bolde
to acorde by clowdes, for some elementes be
colde. Light for y erthe that is were, and
is were, a eke it is hot. Thus euery thyng
contrarieth water that is colde, but by tra-
trarioustye is oued by moysture, for colde be
they moyst. Also the tree that is were, and
a it encloseth al about, is drie: wherefore
it contrarieth erthe y is were: and where they
acorde, for both they ben hote. Thus by these
accordaunces, dissordaunces ben loued and in
a maner of acordaunce they accorden by con-
nection, that is knytting to gether of that ac-
corde cometh a maner of melodie of eche
noble. Lyght so good and bad and contrarie
in dommes, by lacking and prayesing good is
bothe lacked and prayesed of some, and yuell
is bothe lacked a prayesed of some: wherfore
their contrarioustye acorde bothe by lacking
and prayesing. Tha followeth it, though good
be neuer to mokel prayesed, ouerth more to be
knyt than the bad: or els bad for the renome
that he hath, must be take as wel as y good,
and that ouerth not. Nay forsothe quod I
Wel qd she than is renome no wayе to the
knot: so toole quod she holy clerkes writen
of suche glorie of renome. O glorye, glorye,
thou arte none other thyng to thousandes of
folke,

folke, but a great sweller of eeres. Many one hath had ful great renome by false opinyon, of baryaunt people: And what is foulet than folke wrongefully to been prayſed, or by maſyee of ỳ people gyltleſſe lacked: nedes shame folowerh therof to hem that with wrõg prayſerh, and also to the deſertes prayſed, and by: lanye and reproſe of hym that diſclaundreth.

Good chylde (quod he) what ecteth ſuche renome to the conſcience of a wyſe man, that loketh and meaſureth hys goodneſſe, not by fleurleſſe wordes of ỳ people, but by ſothfaſt neſſe of conſcience: by god nothynge. And yf it be fayre a mans name be eched by moche folkes prayſyng, and foulet thyng that mo folke not prayſen. I ſayd to the a lytel here beforn, that no folke in ſtraunge countreyes nought prayſen, ſuch renome may not comen to their eeres, bycauſe of vnknowynge, and other obſtacles as I ſayde: Wherfore more folke not prayſen, and that is right foule to him that renome deſyreth, to were leſſe folke prayſen thã renome enhaunce. I trowe the thanke of a people is naught worth in remembraunce to take, ne it proceedeth of no wyſe iugement, ne euer is it ſtedfaſt pardurable: It is beyne and fleyng, with wynde waſteth and encreaſeth. Trewly ſuche glozye ought to be hated. If gentylleſſe be a clere thynge, renome and glorie to enhaũce, as in reckenyng of thy lynage, than is gentilleſſe of thy kynne, for why it ſemeth that gentilleſſe of thy kynne, is but prayſynge and renome that come of thyne aunceſtres deſertes: and yf ſo be that prayſyng and renome of their deſertes make their clere gentylleſſe, than more they nedes ben gentyl for their gentyll dedes, and not thou: for of thy ſelfe cometh not ſuch maner gentylleſſe, prayſynge of thy deſertes. Thanne gentylleſſe of thyne aunceſſers that forayne is to the, maketh the not gentyll, but vngentyl and reproued, and yf thou contynueſt not their gentylleſſe. And therfore a wyſe man ones ſayde: Better is it thy kynne to ben by the gentyled, than thou to glozyre of thy kynnes gentylleſſe, and haſte no deſerte therof thy ſelfe.

Howe paſſynge is the beaute of fleſhly bodyes: more flyttynge than mouable floures of ſomer. And yf thyne eyen weren as good as the Lynx, that maye ſeye thorowe manye ſtone walles, bothe a fayre and foule in their entrayles, of no maner hewe ſhulde apere to thy ſyght, that were a foule ſyght. Thanne is fayreneſſe by febleſſe of eyen, but of no kynd, wherfore thylke ſhulde be no way to ỳ knot: Whan thilke is went the knot wondeth after. Lo nowe at al proues, none of al theſe thynges nowe parfytly ben in vnderſtandyng, to ben waye to the durynge blyſſe of the knotte. But nowe to concluſion of theſe maters, herkeneth theſe wordes. Tiery ſõmer is knowe from the wynter: in ſhorter courſe draweth ỳ dayes of December, thanne in the moneth of June: The ſprynges of Maye faden and folowen in Octobre. Theſe thynges ben not vnbounden from their olde kynde, they haue not loſt her worke of their proper eſtate. Men of voluntaryous wyl, withſytte that heuens gouerneth. Other thynges ſuffren thynges patiently to werche: Man in what eſtate he be, yet wolde he ben chaunged. Thus by queynt thynges blyſſe is deſyred, and the fruite that cometh of theſe ſpringes, ys but anguis and bytter, al though it be a whyle ſwete, it may not be with holde, haſtely they departe: thus al daye fayleth thynges that fooles wende. Right thus haſt thou fayleth in thy fyrſt weyenge. He that thynketh to ſayle, and drawe after the courſe of ỳ ſterre, de polo antarctico, ſhal he neuer come northwarde to the contrary ſterre of polus arcticus: of whiche thynges if thou take kepe, thy firſt out way goynge, priſon and exile may be cleped. The grounde falſed vnderneth, and ſo haſt thou fayled. Ne wyght I wene blameth hym that ſtyrteth a miſgoing, and ſecheth redy way of his bliſſe.

Nowe me thynketh (quod he) that it ſuffiſeth in my ſhewing the wayes, by dignite, rycheſſe, renome, and power, if thou loke clerely arn no wayes to the knotte.

Tiery argumente lady (quod I tho) that ye han maked in theſe foze nempned mat[illegible]ters, me thynketh hem in my full wyte conceyued, ſhall I no more yf god wyl in the contrarye be begyled: But fayne wolde I and it were your wyll, bliſſe of the knotte to me wer declared, I might fele ỳ better howe my herte myght aſſente to purſue the ende in ſeruyce, as ſhe hathe begonne. O (quod ſhe) there is a melodye in heuen, which clerkes depen armony, but that is not in breakynge of voyce, but it is a maner ſwete thyng of kyndly werchyng, that cauſeth ioy out of nombre, to reckẽ, and that is ioyned by reaſon and

by

y wysedome, in a quantite of proporcyon of
nyetyng. God made al thynge in reason and
n wytte of porporcyon of melody, we mowe
ot suffyse to shewe. It is wrytten by great
erthes & wyse, that in erthly thynges lyght-
y by studye and by trauayle, th' knowynge
ay be getten: but of suche heuenly melody,
nokel trauayle wol brynge out in knowyng
yght lytel. Swetnesse of this paradise hath
ou rauysched, it semeth ye slepten, rested fró
l other diseases, so kyndely is youre herres
herin yground ed. Blysse of two hertes in
ul loue knytte, maye not aryght benymagy-
ned: euer is their contẽplacio i ful of though-
er studye to plesaunce, matter in bringynge,
comforte eucryche to other. And therfore of
erthly thynges, mokel matter lightly cometh
in your lernyng. knowledge of vnderstandig
that is nyghe after eye, but not so nyghe the
couetyse of knyttynge in your hertes: More
souerayn desyre hath euery wight in litel be-
rynge of heuenly conynge, thanne of mokel
materyal purposes in erthe. Ryght so it is in
propertie of my seruauntes, that they been
more affyched in sletynge of lytell thynge in
hys desyre, than of mokell other matter, lasse
in hys conseyence. Thys blysse is a maner of
sowne delycious, in a queynt voyce touched,
and no dynne of notes: there is none impres-
syon of breakynge labourc. I canne it not
otherwyse nempne, for wantynge of pryuye
wordes, but paradyse terrestre ful of delyce-
ous melody, withouten trauayle in sown per
petuel seruyce in ful ioye couerted to endure.
Only kynde maketh hertes in vnderstanding
soto slepe, þ otherwyse may it not ben nempn-
ed, ne i other maner names for lykyng swet-
nesse can I nat it declare, al sugre & honye, al
mynstralsy & melodye ben but soore and galle
in cõparison by no maner proporcio to reken,
in respecte of this blyssful ioy. This armony,
this melody, this perdurable ioy may nat be i
doynge, but betwene heuens and elementes,
or twey kindly hertes, ful knit in trouth of na
turel vnderstandynge, withouten wenynge &
disceit, as heuens & planettes, which thynges
cõtinually for kindely accordaũces, forsoth
al contrarious meuynges, that in to passyue
diseases may sowne, euermore it thrysteth af
ter more werkyng. These thynges in propor-
cion be so wel ioyned, that it vndoth al thing,
whiche in to badnesse by any way may be ac
cõpted. Certes qõ I this is a thig precious
and noble. Alas that falsenesse euer or wan-
trust shulde euer be mayntayned, this ioye to
voyde. Alas that euer any wrecch shulde tho-
rowe wrathe or enuy, tangelyng dare make to
shoue this melody so farre abacke, that opely
dare it not ben vsed: surely wretches ben ful-
fylled with enuy & wrathe, and no wight els.
Flebyng & tales i such wretches dare appere
opely in euery wightes eare, with ful mouth
so charged, mokel malyce moued many mo-
cẽtes to shẽde, god wold their soule therwith
were stragied. Lo, trouth in this blysse is hyd
and oueral vnder couert hym by derth he dare
nat come a place for warryng of the wes
Cõmenly badnesse, goodnesse amasterreth th
my selfe & my soule this ioye wolde I bye, if
the goodnesse were as much as the noblesse to
melody. Qõ qõ she what goodnesse may be a
cõpted more i this material world, truly non
that shalt thou vnderstãde. Is not euery thig
good that is cõtrariant and distroyeng malle
Howe els qõ I Enuye, wrathe, & falsnesse
ben general qõ she & that wot euery man by
yng in hys right mynde, the knotte the whiche
we haue in thys blesse, is contrarvaunt and
distroyeth such maner yuels. Ergo it is good
what hath caused any wight to do any good
dede, fynde me any good, but if this knotte
be þ chefe cause: Nedes more it be good
causeth so many good dedes. Euery cause
more, and worthyer than thynge caused
in that mores possessyon, al thinges
compted. As the kyng is more than his people
and hath in possessyon all hys realme
Right so the knot is more than al other goo
des, thou myght recken al thinges lasse, and
that to him longeth ouerthe into hys mo
cause of worshyp and of wel do rourne
els rebel and out of his mores defendyng
voyde. Right so of euerye goodnesse in the
knot and in to þ cause of his worshyp
to rourne. And trewly euery thyng that hath
beyng profytably is good, but nothing hath
to ben more profytably than this knot
ges it mayntayneth, and he in their powers to
mayntayne: It maketh myssle to bene amen-
ded with good gouernaunce in doyng. It do
seth hertes so togyder, þ rancour is out thre
ten. Who that it lẽgest kepeth, lengest is gla
ded. I trowe qõ I hertykes, and myssle
meanyng people hence forwarde wol mayn-
taine this knotte, for therthorough shul they
ben mayntayned, and vtterly wol turne, and

leaue

leaue their olde fuel vnderstanding, & knytte this goodnesse, and profer so ferre in seruyce, that name of seruauntes myght they haue. Their tangles shall cease, me thynketh hem lacketh matter nowe to alege. Certes (quod Ioue) if they of good wil thus turned as thou sayst wolen trewely performe, yet shul they be abled party of this blisse to haue: and they wol not, yet shul my seruaūtes ỳ werre well susteyne in myn helpe of maintenaunce to the ende. And they for their good trauayle shullē in rewarde so ben meded, that endelesse toye body and soule togyther in this shullen abyden, there is euer action of blisse without possible corruption, there is actiō perpetuel in werke without trauayle, there is euerlasting passe, without anye of labour: contynuel plyte without ceasyng conceyued to endure.

No tonge may tel ne herte may thinke ỳ lest poynt of this blisse. God birn ge me thyder (qō I than). Contynueth well (qō she) to the ende, & thou might not fayle than, for though thou spede not here, yet shal the passyon of thy martred lyfe ben written, and radde to forme eue great Iupyter that god is of south, and lyghe in the holown esse of heuen, there he sit in his trone: and euer thou shalt forward ben holden amonge al these heuyns for a knyght, that myghtest with no penaunce ben discomfyted. Lo is a derke matter that lyuingly gostynge is gnawen to the bones. Certes (qō I) there ben good wordes of cōforte, a litel myn herte is reioysed in a mery wyse. Ye (qō she) and he that is in heuen felyth more ioye, than whan he first herde therof spehe. Soth is (qō I) but wyst I the soth, that after disease comforte wolde folowe with blysse, so as ye haue often declared, I wolde wel suffre this passion with the better chere, but my thought ful sorowe is endelesse, to thynke howe I am cast out of a welfare, & yet dayne hue this y. tel none herte none hede to me warde throwe, which thynges wold greatly me by wayes of comforte disport, to weten in my selfe a lytell with other me ben ymoued: and my sorowes persen not in her balaunce the weyght of a pese: Slynges of her daunger, so heuily pey sen, they drawe my causes so hye, that in her eyen they semen but lyght and right litel.

O, for (qō she) heuen with skyes that foule cloudes maken & darke wethers, with great tempestes and huge, maketh the mery dayes with softe shinning sonnes. Also the yere with drawyth floures and beaute of herbes and of erth. The same yeres maketh springes & ioye in Ueere so to renouel with peynted colou res, that erthe semed as gay as heuen. Sees that blasteth & with wawes throweth shyppes, of which the lyuyng creatures for great peryl of hem dreden: right so ỳ same sees maketh smothe waters and golden saylyng, and comforteth hem with noble hauen that tyme were so ferde. Haste thou not (qō she) lerned in thy youth that Iupiter hath in his warderobe bothe garmentes of ioye and of sorowe. What wost thou howe soone he wol turne of the ỳ garmente of care, & clothe the in blysse parde it is not ferre fro the. Lo an olde prouerbe alleged by manye wyse: Whan bale is greatest, than is bote a nye bore. Wherefore wylt thou dismaye: hope wel and serue wel, and that shal the saue, with thy good byleue. Ye, ye quod I yet se I not by reason howe this blysse is comming, I wot it is contingēt, it maye fal an other. O (qō she) I haue mo kel to done to clere thyne understandyng and voyde these errours out of thy mynde, I wol proue it by reason thy wo may not alwayen duren. Euery thynge kyndely (qō she) is gouerned & ruled by the heuenly bodyes, which hauen ful worthynge here on erth, and after course of these bodyes, al course of your doynges here ben gouerned and ruled by kynde. Thou wost wel bi cours of planettes al your dayes proceden, & to euerich of tuge ther houres be enterchaūged roundmele about, by sub myttyng worthyng naturelly to other, of whi che chaūges cometh these trāsitorye tymes ỳ maketh reuoluyng of your yeres thus roundmele, euery hath ful myght of worthynge, til al seuen han had her cours about. Of whiche worthynges & possessyon of houres, ỳ dayes of the woke haue take her names, after deno mination of these seuen planettes. Lo your sō day gineth at ỳ first houre after noone on the saturday, in which houre is than the sonne in ful might of worthynge, of whom sonday ta keth his name. Next hym folowyth Uenus, & after Mercurius, & than the Moone, so than Saturnus, after whō Iouis, & than Mars and aven thā the Sonne, & so forthe be. xxiiii houres togyder, in which houre gynning in ỳ seconde day stante the Moone, as maister for that time to rule, of whom mōday taketh his name, and this course folowyth of al other dayes generally in doyng. This course of na

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ture of these bodyes chaungyng, stynten at a certayne terme, symylted by their first kynde, and of hem al gouernementes in this clemen ted worlde proceden, as in spryinges, constella cions, engendzures, & al that folowen kynde and reson, wherfore the course that foloweth sorowe and ioy, kyndely moten entrechangen their times, so that alway on wele as alway on wo may not endure. Thus seest thou ap perily thy sorowe into wele more ben chaun ged, wherfore in such case to better syde euer more enclyne thou shuldest. Trewly here the ende of sorowe anon entreth ioy, by maner of necessyte it wol ne may non other betyde, and so thy contygence is disproued: if thou holde this opynō any more, thy wyt is right lewd. Wherfore in ful conclusion of al this, thylke Margarite thou desyrest, hath bē to the dere in thy herte, and for her halt thou suffred ma ny thoughtful diseases, herafter shal be cause of moche myrth and ioye, and loke how glad canst thou bene, and ease al thy passed hea uesse with manyfolde ioyes. And than wol I as blythly here the spekē thy myrthes in ioy, as I now haue yharde thy sorowes and thy complaynyes. And if I mowe in aughte thy ioye euer ease, by my trouthe on my syde shall nat be leaued for no maner traueyle, that I with al my mightes right blythly wol helpe, and euer ben redy you both to plese. And tha thanked I that lady with all goodly maner ȳ I worthely coud, and trewly I was greatly reioysed in myne hert, of her fayre behestes, & profered me to be saw in al that she me wold ordeyne whyle my lyfe lested.

Me thynketh (qō I) that ye haue ryghte wel declared, that way to ȳ knot shuld not ben in none of these dysprouing thynges, and now order of our purpose this axeth, ȳ ye shuld me shew if any way be thyther, and which thilke way shulde bene, so that openly may be sey, the very hye way in ful confusion of these other thynges.

Thou shalte (quod she) vnderstande, that one of thre lyues as I ferst sayd euery creature of mankynde is sprongen, and so forth proce deth. These lyues ben thorow names depar ted in thre maner of kyndes, as bestially che, manlyche, and resonablyche, of which e two ben vsed by fleshely body, and the thyrde by his soule. Bestyal amonge resonables is for boden in euery lawe and euery feare, both in christen and other, for euery wight dispiseth hem that lyueth by lustes and delites, as hym that is thral and bounden seruaunte to thyn ges right foule, suche ben compted werse than men, he shal nat in their degre ben reckened, ne for suche one alowed. Yetthykes farme ther, chosen lyfe bestial, that voluptuously lyuen, so that as I ferst sayde to the vi maner and resonable lyuinges, our mater was to declare, but manly lyfe in lyuynge after the vices fleshly waves to chese, may nat blythe in this knotte be coquered, as by reason is proued. Wherfore by resonable lyfe he must nedes it haue, sithe alway is to this knotte, but nat by the ferste tway lues, wherfore nedes more it ben to the thrde, and for to true vnder stande but nat after flesshe, is more resonable than lyche reckened by clerkes. Therfore how this way cometh in, I wol it blythly declare.

Se now quod she that these bodyly goo des of manlyche lyuinges, welden for to hau ne boundes and smertade houses, also for well remēbre him to their endes in their wor ges they ben thoughtful and doute, lyghted a beer that hathe had hys honde, afore at the flight begynneth to stynge: so these goo ly goodes at the laste more and more, stynge they at her goynge, whan reason streth and clene vanysheth away.

Forthe quod I me thynketh I haue ful ferued, in shewyng of these ... I hadde lyfelyn respecte amonge and worthy, yet had I a faute ... thought for the tyme, in forthering ... flenaunce, which while it dured, I ... hauyng moche how to make ... riche, ful fulfilled with worldly ... gone to be reuerenced in worthy ... thought that I had to hope for ... and me semed to shyne in glory ... manhode afterth in meane ... myne administracion coude non ... chery by forthe cause on me parte. ... selue wotten wel, that of the ... led by my soueraynes I was but a ... and yet mokell meane folke wol fully ... reason tylke maters maynteyne, ... may meanwhile glosen them selfe, ... ceyue hauen fayre, therof ought nothyng ... yuel to be laide to me wardes, sithen as ... raunt I am tourned, and no more I shrinke, neither the thinges me none suche other to fu thene, but vtterly distroye without medlynge

ne blowe a tape. Nowe (qõ I) yf a manne be vertuous & al in vertue lyueth, how hath he al these thinges? That shal I proue (qõ she) what power hath any man to let another of lyuyng in vertue? for prisõment or any other disese, he take it paciẽtly, discõforteth he not, þ tyrannt ouer his soule no power maye haue? Than hath that man so tourmẽted suche power, þ he nyl he discõfit, ne ouercome maye he not ben, sithen paciẽce his soule ouercometh, and as not ouercomen. Suche thyng þ maye nat be a maistred, he hath nede to nothyng, for he hath sufficiaunce enowe to helpe him selfe. And thilke ryng that thus hath power & sufficiaunce, & no tyraunt may it reue, & hath dignite to sette at naught al thynges, here it is a great dignite, that hath mast maistry. Wherfore this power sufficiaunce so enclosed with dignite, by al reason ennoumẽt shal haue. Thus is thilke riches with sufficiãce ye shulde loke of ert: this is thilke worshipful dignite ye shuld coueyte: this is thilke power of myght, in whi che ye shuld trust: this is the fayr renome of glory that endelesse endureth, & alwys hath his laude in vertuous lyuyng. Certes quod I) al this is soth, & so I se wel that vertue with ful gripe encloseth al these thiges. Wherfore in some I may lere, by my trouth, vertue of my Margarete brought me first in to your ser-uice, to haue knowyng with that is wel, not to hayn longinges ne folkes fraile wordes, but onely our cõuersation togider: & tha I seyng thentent of her true meuyng with stedfast vertue of patience, that she hath norlyngs in yuel, to quite the wicked leasinges that false tõgues ofte in her haue layde. I haue sey it my self, goodly forwarnesse hath sprong out of her hert, betre & accord aboue al other thiges she desireth in a good mekemanner, and suffe rith many wicked tales.

TRewly lady to you it were a grete wor ship, that suche thinges by due chastisemente were amended. Ye qõ she I haue the excused, al suche thynges as yet maye not be redressed: thy Margaretes vertue I com mende wel the more that pacyently such anoyes suffereth. Dauid king was mekel & suffred mokel hate & many yuel speches, no dispite ne shame that his enemys him deden, myght not moue paciẽce out of his herte, but euer in one plyte mercy he vsed. Wherfore god hi self to-ke reward to the thynges, & theron suche punyshment let fal. Trewly by reason it ought be ensãple of drede to al maner peoples mirth I nam degradie in wrath no gouernaunce in punishment ought to haue. Plato had a cause his seruaus to scourge, & yet cleped he his neyboure to performe þ doyng, hym self wold not, lest wrath had him a mastred, & so myght he haue layd on to moche: euermore groũded vertue therwith thentent fro vein. And trewly I woote well for her goodnes & vertue, thou hast desyred my seruice to her plesante will þ more, & thy self therto fully hast profered. Good lady qõ I is vertue the bye waye to this knot, that long we haue yhandled here in soth qõ she and without vertue goodly this knot may not be gotten. Ah nowe I se (quod I) how vertue in me sayleth & I as a serein without burionyng or fruit alwaye worche, & so I stonde in disperyt of this noble knot, for vertue in me hath no manner norlyngs. I wrote where about haue I trauayled. Pees (qõ she) of thy first waye thy trauayle is ny-hel, & as touchyng the seconde way, I se wel thy meanyng. Thou wolbest cõfonde me if I couered, because I brought the to seruice and euery of my seruaus I helpe to come to his birth, as I sayd here before: & thou sayest thy self, thou mightest nat be holpen as thou nedest, because that vertue in þ sayleth. And this birth perfitly thou vertue maye not be gote, thou memest of these wordes cõfortable on to folowe. Yea be ye hardy I haue no seruaus but he be vertuous in dede & thought I brought the in my seruice, yet art thou nat my seruaut: but I say, thou might so vertue in vertue hereafter, that than shalt thou be my seruaunt, and as for my seruaunt accompted. For habyte maketh no monke, ne wearyng of gylte spurres maketh no knyghte. Neuer the latter in confortte of thyne herte, yet wol I otherwyse answere. Certes lady qõ I cõ-to ye muste nedes or els I had myghe caught suche a corbiade for soyote, I wotte it wel I shulde it neuer haue recouered. And therfore nowe I praye to enforme me in this, or els I holde me without recouerye. I may not long endure till this lesson be lerned, and of thys mischefe the remedy knowen. Nowe (quod she) be nat wrothe, for there is no man on lyue that maye come to a precious thyng long coueyted, but he some tyme suffre trouble dis-eases, and mengyll thy self to bene vnlyche to all other, that maye not bene: And with the

most

more sorowe that a thing is getten, the more he hath ioye, the like thing afterwardes to kepe, as it fareth by chyldren in schole that for lernynge arne beaten, whan their lesson they forgetten, comenly after a good disciplynyng with a yerde, they kepe right well the doctryne of theyr schole.

Right wt these wordes, on this ladye I threwe vp myne eyen to se her countenaunce and her chere, & she aperceyuing this fantasye in myn hert, gan her semblaunt goodly on me cast, and said in this wise.

It is wel knowe, bothe to reason and experyence in doynge, euery actiue vertu hath his passyue, and whan they ben togyder, actiue and passyue ben ycleaped by these philosophers, if tyme be in place chaffynge thynge able to be chafed or here, and thilke thynges ben sette in such a distaunce that the one may werche, the other shall suffre. Thylke Margarite thou beryst is ful of vertue, and able to be actiue in goodnes: but euery herbe hath his vertue out of the from wythin, the same yeueth hy the that thynges may be fery. Euery fyre hath thilk thing that is weighed and it be able to be here, vertue of this Margarite ouerseth in erthe, and nothyng is more able to suffre working or werke carde of actyf, but passyf of the same actyf, and no passyf to vertues of this Margaryte, but as all my power can I fynde, for that her vertue muste nedes on the werche in what place euer thou be, wythin distaunce of her worthy carde, as her very passyf thou arte clothed: but vertue may the nothynge profyte, but thy desyre be performed and all thy sorowes crased. Ergo through werchynge of her vertue thou shalte easily ben holpen and brought out of all care, and welcome to this tonge by the beryed. Lady quod I thys is a good lesson in gyrnyng of my loue, but were ye wel for the, thoughe I suppose the haue moche vertue, I wolde my spousayle were proued, and than maye I lyue out of doute, and restore me greatly in thynkyng of the vertues so the werb. I herde the say quod he at my begynnyng when I receyued the Margarite for to serue that thy iewel, thylke Margarite thou beryst, was clothed in a mulbe with able vertuell. Ye forsothe quod I. So I saye, and so it is wel, quod he, euery thyng kyndly the werb it selfe, this iewel closed in a blewe shel, excellence of colours sheweth vertue from within, and so euery wight shulde rather loke to the propre vertue of thynges, than to his forayne goodes. If a thyng be engendred of good mater, comenly and for the more parte it foloweth after the congrelement vertue of the first mater, and it be not corrupt with vyces, to procede in encrease of good vertues: the right so it fareth of babes, comenly great excellence in vertue of lynage, for the more parte discendeth by kynde to the succession vertues to folowe, wherfore I saye, the colours of euery Margarite shewth fro wythin the shelle in vertue kyndely beten whan mery wether is a lofte, apeyrth in mennes eye of colours in blewe, the bastarde is in peace betokenyng wysdom and without Margarite is engendred by heuenly dewe and closeth in shelle by excellence of colours, wherfore the engendrure were made on moone or on thus saith kynde of this perle. The precious Margarite that thou seyest shewth in shelle discreted by nobley of vertue from the brought for the moulded and congeled in the shelle, that mother is of all vertues and werkes that men fynde wrytten, by the mocion of the colours, ben figured the vertues that in the Margarite with peace and all this is redressed in moche more vertues thilke vertues token. All thynges that ben to reduced into good by meane semblable, and to the perfect of perfect shalle neuer more mourn, after place to place, to comune, by perfect meane that shalle fetche lowell degree of feelynge, and fuche bene reduced in by meane. So is redressed, the moder of al vertue, halle the place to the lowest degree discreted down of heuen, and there by a meane of vertue engendrure arne these Margarites engendred, and afterwarde congeled. Made nat mebelle, folowe the by heuen to make carde our thest so noble a dewe that after congelynge a Margarite with endeles vertue and euerlastyng ioye was wythful welfull of grace vertue to euery creature, that goodly wolde it receyue. Certes quod I these thynges bene right noble, I haue erste herde these same

sawes. Than (quod she) thou wost well these thinges ben sothe. Ye forsothe (qd I) at the full. Nowe (quod she) that thys Margarite is ful of vertue it is wel proued, wherfore some grace, some mercye amonge other vertues, I wotte ryghte wel on the shal discende. Ye (quod I) yet wolde I haue better declared vertues in this Margarite, kindely to ben grounded. That shal I shewe ỳ (qd she) and thou woldest it lerne. Learne quod I) what nedeth suche wordes: Were ye not wel lady your selfe that all my cure, all my dyligence, and al my might haue turned by your counsayle, in pleasaunce of that perle, all my thought and all my study, with youre helpe desyreth, in worshyp thilke iewel to encrease al my trauayle and all my besynesse in youre seruyce this Margaryte to gladde in some halue: me were leauer her honoure, her pleasaunce, and her good cheere than owe me for to be maynteyned and kepte, and I of suche thynge in her lykynge to be cause, than al the welthe of bodyly goodes ye coude recke. And wolde neuer god, but I put my selfe in great iopertye of al that I wolde, that is nowe no more but my lyfe alone, rather than I shulde suffre thilke iewel in any poynte ben blemished, as ferre as I may suffre, & with my mughes stretche. Suche thinge (qd she) may moste further thy grace, and that in my seruyce auaunce. But nowe (quod Loue) wylte thou graunte me thilke Margaryte to ben good. O good good, qd I, why temptye me and tene wyth suche maner speche. I wolde graunte that, though I shuld anone dye, and by my trouth fight in the quarel, yf any wight wold contreplede. It is so moche the lyghter (qd Loue) to proue our entent.

Ye quod I but yet wolde I here how ye wolde proue that she were good by reasonable skyl, that it mowe not ben denyed, for although I knowe and so doth many other, many folde goodnes and vertue in this Margarite ben pyrred, yet some men there ben that no goodnes spekem: and what euer your wordes ben here de and your reasons ben shewed, suche your speches laby by aduenture of your excellence, shullen ben stopped and ashamed. And more they that han none acquayntaunce in her persone, yet mowe they knowe her vertues, and ben the more enformed in what wyse they mowe set their herres, whan hem lyste in to your seruyce any entre make: for trewly al this to begynne, I wot wel my selfe that thilke iewel is so precious perle, as a womanly woman in her kynde, in whome of goodnesse, of vertue, and also of answeryng, shappe of lymmes, and features so wel in al poyntes acordyng, nothynge fayleth: I leue that kynde her made with great studye, for kynde in her person nothyng hath forget, and that is wel sene. In euery good wightes hert she hath grace of cõmendyng and of vertuous prayseyng. Alas that euer kynde made her deedly, saue onely in that I wot well, that Nature in fourmynge of her in nothyng hath erred.

Certes quod Loue thou haste wel begonne, and I aske the this question: Is not in generall euery thynge good? Not qd I. No quod she saue not god euery thinge ỳ he made, were not good. That is wonder qd I howe yuel thinges comen a place, sithen ỳ al thinges weren right good. Thus qd she I wolde declare euerich qualyte & euery action, & euery thinge that hath any maner of beynge it is of god, and god it made, of whome is all goodnes & al beyng, of hym is no badnesse: badde to be is naught: good to be is somwhat, and therfore good and beyng is one in vnderstandyng. Howe may this be quod I, for often tymes me assayled, and moste badnes therin haue I founde, and so me semeth bad to be somwhat in kynde. Thou shalt qd she vnderstande ỳ suche maner badnesse, why she is yfed to purifye wrong berrs is somwhat, and god it made and beyng hath, and that is good: other badnes no beyng hath but erre, it is in the negatyue of somwhat, and that is naught and nothynge being. The partes essencial of beyng arne said in double wyse, as that it is, and these partes ben found in euery creature, for al thing a this halfe the first beyng is beyng through partycipacion, takyng parte of beyng, so that euery creature is different by twene beynge and of him through whom it is and his own beyng: yet as euery good is a maner of beynge, so is it good thorowe beyng, for it is naught other to be: and euery thig thought be good it is not of him selfe good, but it is good by that it is ordinable to the great goodnes. This duallye after diuers determinacion is founde in euery creature

ture, be it neuer so syngle of onhed. Ye (qð I) but there as it is ysayde that god saue euery thyng of hys makynge, and were right good, as your selfe sayde to me not longe tyme sythen. I aske wether euery creature is ysayde good, throughe goodnesse vnfourmed eyther is fourmed, and afterwarde yf it be accepte vtterly good. I shal saye the quod she these great passid clerkes han deuyded good in to good beyng alone, and that is nothynge but good, for nothynge is good in that wyse but god. Also in good by participacyon, and that is yclepyd good, for tarte fette and representacyue of goodly goodnesse, and after this manyfolde good is sayd, that is to saye, good in kinde and good in gendre, and good of grace, and good of loue. Of good in kynde Austen sayethe, all that ben ben good: but perauuenture thou wolde wete whether of hem selfe it be good, or els of another goodnesse, for naturall goodnesse of euery substaunce is nothyng els than his substaunciall beyng, whiche is vncreaped goodnesse, after comparyson that he hath to his first goodnesse, so as it is endirate by meanes vnto the first goodnesse. Here herith this thyng for the ful, that this name good is in general name in kynde, as it is comparysoned generally to his principal ende, whiche is god knotte of al goodnesse. Euery creature eyeth god as made and so ther han ful apetyd to thinke god by affection, such as to hem belongeth: and in this wise al thinges be good of y great god, which is good alone. This wonder thinge quod I how ye haue by many reasons proued my first wayes to be errour and misgoynge, and cause of badnesse and feble meanyng in the grounde ye alleged to be cored: whence is it that suche badnesse hath sprunge, sythen al thinges thus in general ben good, and badnesse hath no beynge, as ye haue declarde: I wene if al thinges ben good, I might than with the first way in that good haue ended, and so by goodnesse haue comen to blysse in your seruyce delited. All thynge quod she is good by beyng imparticipacyon out of the first goodnesse, whiche goodnesse is corrupte by badnesse, and badde meanyng maners: god hath in good thynges that they ben good by beyng, and not to hurt, for there is absence of rightful loue, for badnesse is nothynge but euely yeelt wyl of the doer, and through gylery of y doer, wherfore at the gynning of the worlde, euery thyng by hym selfe was good, and in vniuersal they were tyght good. An eye or a hande is fayrer and better in a body sette in hys kyndely place, than from the body disceuered. Euery thyng in his kyndly place being kindly good bothe where, and out of that place boyded, it defoleth and is defouled him selue. Oure noble god in glorreuse wise by armony this worlde ordeyned, as in purtertures sholde with colours medled, in whiche blache and other derke colours commenden the golden and the alured paynture, euery parte in kyndely place one beside another, more for other gliterith: right so inel sayre maketh right sayre more glorious, and right so of goodnesse and of other thynges in derre. Ye before other badde, and not good perles as this Margarete that we han of this matter, reuen by the ayde of inel goodnesse and inel derre, right mokell goodnesse and derre in the Margarete to ben proued, in thynge wolde to be founde and proued. Some shulde euer goodnesse of peace haue be knowe, but for, were sometyme tryane, and mokel more to lothe howe shulde men ben proued and mercyfe passe were, by the influence to be punished. Therfore grete goodnesse of a thinge is founde, the lotsomful derke is good ordeynynge endure, been confoned, vnwise and accepe ayrtuene derke sotte in hys stede. But nerer thou I proffer of his acquaintance him amonge my seruauntes that preueth pallas, in vnderynge of Mercury, and to that to pallas he be knytte by ryde of lawe, not according to the resonable conclusyon of derkenesse in doynge haue grace to ben sufficient: or els hym that weneth the Moone for the resemble of the sunne derre. To otherwise by nathes sight of the Moone, ghesse to forsen vnderne thoughtes and blynde vnderstandyng of loue yeueth great gladnesse. Ye who so in sene no bylene whame sothe sale is shewed, ademe and adebis hys name is mered. Wyle folke and worthy in generalle borne of derre and of lynage, yeuen full credence in forbrigle of loue with a good herr, there as good euydence or experience in doynge the weth not the contrarye. Thus mighteth thou haue ful parte in thy Margaryes goodnesse, by conuendement of other iewels badnesse, and yeelnesse in doynge. Stroundemicle diseases yeueth seueral houres in loue.

Loue by my trouthe, quod I thys is wel

 declared

declared that my Margarite is good, for sythen other been good, and she passeth many other in goodnesse and vertue, wherthrough by manet necessarye she muste be good: and goodnesse of thys Margaryte is nothynge els but vertue, wherfore she is vertuous, and yf there fayled any vertue in anye syde, there were lacke of vertue: badde nothynge els is he may be, but lacke and waute of good and goodnesse, and so shulde she haue that same lacke, that is to saye badde, and that maye not be, for she is good, and that is good me thynketh all good: and so by consequence me semeth vertuous and no lacke of vertue to haue. But the Sonne is not knowe but he shyne, ne vertuous herbes but they haue her kynde werchyng, ne vertue but it strecche in goodnesse or profyte to another, is no vertue. Than by al wayes of reason, sythen merye and pyte ben moste commended amonge other vertues, and they might neuer ben shewed refreshemente of helpe and of comforte, but nowe at my mokel nede, and that is the kynde werkynge of these vertues: trewly I wene I shal not varye from these helpes.

Fyre yf he yeue none heate, for fyre is not demed. The sonne but he shyne, for sonne is not accompted. Water but it wete, the name shal ben chaunged. Vertue but it werche, of goodnesse dothe it fayle, and in to his contrarye the name shall be reuersed, and these ben impossible: wherfore the contradictorie that is necessarye, nedes muste I leue.

Certes ofte in thy person and out of thy mouthe these wordes lyen wel to ben sayd, & in thyne understandyng to be leued, as in entent of thys Margarite alone: and here nowe my speche in conclusyon of these wordes.

In these thynges (quod she) that me lyst nowe to shewe openly, shal be founde the mater of thy sickenesse, & what shal be ỳ medicyn ỳ may be thy sorowes lysse & cofort, as wel ỳ as al other that amysse haue erred, and out of the way walked, so that any drop of good wyl in amendemente ben dwelled in their hertes. Prouerbes of Salomon openly teacheth, howe sometyme an innocent walkyd by ỳ way in blyndnesse of a derke nyght, whom mette a woman (if it be lefely to saye) as a strumpet arayed, redily purueyed in turnynge of thoughtes with beyne langlynges, and of lest inpacient by dissimulacyon of my termes, sayeng in thys wise: come and be we dronken of our swete pappes, vse we coueytous collynges. And thus drawen was thys innocent, as an ore to the larder. Lady (quod I) to me thys is a queynte thynge to vnderstande: I praye you of this parable declare me the entent. Thys innocent (quod she) is a scholer lernynge of my lore in techynge of my blysse, in whiche thynge the daye of hys thought turning endyneth in to cue, and the sonne of very light faylynge, maketh darke nyght in hys comynge. Thus in derkenesse of many doutes he walketh, and for blyndenesse of vnderstandynge, he ne wote in what ware he is in: for so the such one may ly ghely ben begyled. To whome came loue fayned, not clothed of my lyuery, but vnlefful lustye habite, with softe speche and mery, and with fayre honied wordes heretikes and misse meynge people sklaten and wymplen their errours. Austen witnesseth of an heretyke that in his first begynnynge he was a man tyght expette in reasons, and swete in his wordes, and the werkes miscorden. Thus fareth fayned loue in her firste werchynges: thou knowest these thynges for trewe, thou hast hem proued by experyence. Sometyme in doynge thyn owen person, in whiche thinge thou hast founde mater of mokel disease. Was not fayned loue redily purueyed thy wittes to catch and tourne thy good thoughtes? trewly she hath wounded the conscience of many with flowyshinge of mokel langlynge wordes: and good worthe thanked I it for no glose, I am gladde of my prudence thou hast so manlye her beyned. To me atte thou muche holden, that in thy kynde course of good meanyng I returne thy minde: I trewe me had I shewed the thy Margaryte, thou haddest neuer returned. Of firste in good perfyte ioye was euer fayned loue impacient, as the water of Nilor, whiche euermore floweth with swiftnesse and pryuy noyse, tyl it come nyghe the brinke, and than gynneth it so out of measure to bolne, with moneliches of chaungyng formes, that in course of euery rennynge it is in power to spyl all hys circuite of cankes. Thus fayned loue priuely at the fullest of hys flowynge, newe formes debate to araise. And al be it that Boecius often with hole vnderstandynge knowen suche perylous matters, yet Venerians so lustye ben and so lende in their

wyttes

wyttes, that in suche thynges right lytel or naught don they fele, and writen and cryen to their felowes: here is blysse, here is ioye, and thus in to one same errour, mokel folke they drawen. Come they sayne, and be we dronken of our pappes, that ben fallas and lyenge glose, of whiche mowe they not souke mylke of helthe, but deedly venym and porson corrupcyon of sorowe. Mylke of fallas, is venym of discryte: Mylke of lyenge glose is venym of corrupcyon. Lo what thynge cometh out of these pappes: vse we conveyted collynges, desyre we and meddle we false wordes with sote, and sote with false, trewly this is the sorynesse of fayned loue, nedes of these surfettes sickenesse must folowe. Thus as an ore to thy langoryng deth wer thou drawen, the sote of ꝑ smoke hath the al defased. Euer the deper thou sometime wadest ꝑ soner thou it sounde: yf it had the kylled it had be lytell wonder. But on that other syde my trewe seruaunt not fayned ne discryne conne, sothly their doynge is open, my foundement endureth, be the durthē neuer so great, euer in one it lasteth: it reueth lyfe and blyssfull goodnesse in the laste endes, though the gynnynges ben sharpe. Thus of two contrarye, contrarye ben the effectes. And so thylke Margaryte thou seruest shal sene thee by her seruyce out of perylloꝰ tribulacyon delyuered, bycause of her seruyce in to newe disease fallen, by hope of amendemente in the laste ende, with ioye to be gladded, wherfore of kynde pure, her mercy with grace of good helpe shal she graunt, a els I shal her so strayne, that with pyte shal she ben amaystred. Remembre in thyne herte howe horrible sountyme to thyne Margaryte thou trespasest, and in a great wise ayenst her thou forferest: clepe ayen thy mynde, and knowe thyne owne gyltes. What goodnesse, what bountye, with mokell folowyng pyte founde thou in that tyme? Where thou not goodly accepted in to grace? by my pluchynge was she to forgyuenesse enclyned. And after I her styred to drawe the to house, and yet wondest thou vtterlye for euer haue ben refused But wel thou wosse, sythen that I in suche sharpe disease myght so greatly availe, what thynkest in thy wyt howe fere maye my wytte stretche? And thou lache not on thy side I wol make the knotte: Certes in thy good herryng I wol acorde with the plaunter. I haue founde Dauid in my seruice true, and with holy oyle of peace and of rest longe by hym desyred, vtterly he shal be anoynted. Truste well to me, and I wol thee not fayle. The leanyng of the first way with good hert of continuaunce, that I se in the grounded, this purpose to parfourme, drawyth my by maner of cōstraynyng, that nedes must I ben thyne helper: although myne be a whyle betaryed, it shall come at suche season, that thy thought shall ben ioyed. And wolde neuer god, sythen thyne herte to my reasones ben assented, and openlye haste confessed thyne amysse gorge, and nowe cryest after mercy, but if mercy folowed thy blysse shal ben redy twis, thou ne wost how sone. Now be a good chylde I rede. The kynde of vertues with Margaryte rehersed, by strength of me myn persone shul werche. Comforte the in this for thou marste not miscarye. And these wordes said, she streyght her on legth a rested a whyle

¶ Thus endeth the seconde booke, and here after folowyth the thyrde booke

I nombre sayne these clerkes that it is naturel some of diuerse thinges, as in tellynge one, two, thre, and so forthbut amonge al nombres thre is determined for moste certayne. Wherfore in nombre certayne thys, werke of my brefe leudenesse I thynke to ende and parfourme.

Ensample by thys worlde in thre tymes is deuyded: Of whyche the fyrste is cleped Demacion, that is to saye, goyng out of crewway, and al that tho dreden, in hel were they punyshed for a mans synne, tyll grace & mercy sente hem thence, and there ended the fyrst tyme. The seconde tyme lasteth from the spryngynge of mercyable grace, durynge the ende of transytorie tyme, in whiche is shewed ꝑ true way in forbeyng of the badde, and that is cleped tyme of grace: and that thynge is not yeuen by desserte of yeldynge one benefyte for another, but onely throughe goodnesse of the yeuer of grace in thilke tyme. Who so can wel vnderstande, is shapen to be saued in soules blysse. The thyrde tyme shal gyn whan trāsytorie thinges of worldes han made their ende, and that shal ben in ioye, glorie, and red body

body

body and soule, that wel han deserued in the tyme of grace. And thus in that heuen togyther shul they dwel perpetuelly without any ymagynatife yuel in any halue. These tymes are fygured by the thre dayes that our god was closed in yerthe, and in the thirde arose, shewynge our resurrection, to ioye and blysse of tho ỳ it deseruen, by his mercyable grace. To this lewde boke in thre matters acordaut to the tymes, lyghtly by a good insert maye been vnderstande, as in the tiesse errours of mysse goynge is shewed, with sorowful pyne punyshed is eyed after mercye. In the seconde is grace in good waye proued, whiche is sayling without deserte, thyke tirll mysse amendyng in correction of the errours and euen waye to bryngе, with comforte of welfare into amendemente weryngе. And in the thyrde ioye and blysse graunted to hym that wel came deserue it, and hath sauour of vnderstandyngе in the tyme of grace. Thus in ioy of my thyrde boke shal the mater be tyl it ende. But special cause I haue in my herte to make this processe of a Margarit perle, that is so precious a gẽme with clere & lutel of whi the stones or iewel, the tonges of vs Englysh people tourneth ỳ right names, & clepeth hem Margery perles: thus varyeth our speche frõ manye other langages. For trewely latyn, frenche, and manye mo other langages cleapeth hem Margery perles, the name Margarites or Margrite peerles: wherfore in ỳ denomination I wol me accorde to other mens tonges, in that name clepynge. These clerkes that treaten of kyndes, & studien out the properte there of thynges, sayne the Margarit is a lytel white peerle, throughout holowe & rounde, and vertuous, and on the see tydes in the more Britayne in muscle shelles of ỳ heuenly dewe the best ben engendred: in whiche by experience ben founde thre fayre vertues. One is, it yeueth comfort to the telinge spirites in bodily persones of reason. Another is good, it is profytable helthe ayenst passyons of sorie mens hertes. And the thirde it is nede ful and noble in staunchynge of bloode, there eis to mochе woldе our ten. To whiche perle & vertues me lyst to liken at thys tyme Philosophy with her thre spеces, that is naturel, and moral, and resonable: of whiche thynges herеth what sayn these great clerkes. Philosophye is knowyng of deuynly & manly thinges toyned with studye of good lyuynge, and this stante in two thynges, that is conynge and opinion: conynge is whan a thyng by certayne reson is conceyued. But wretches & fooles and lewde men, many wyl conceyue a thyng and mayntayn it as for a sothe, though reson be in the contrarye, wherfore conninge is a straunger. Opinion is while a thinge is in non certayne, and hydde from mens very knowlegyng, and by no partyte reason fully declared, as thus: yf the sonne be so moche as men weuen, or eis yf it be more than the erth. For in sothnesse the certayne quantite of that planet is vnknowen to erthly dwellers, and yet by opinion of some menne it is holden for more than mydle erthe. The first spece of philosophye is naturel, whiche in kyndely thynges treten, and sheweth causes of heuen, and strength of kyndely course: as by arsmetrike, geometry, musyke, & by astronomye, techeth wayes and course of heuens, of planetes, and of sterres aboute heuen and erthe, and other elemẽtes. The seconde spece is moral, whiche in order of lyuing manes techeth, and by reson prouyeth vertues of soule most worthy in our liuing, whiche ben prudence, iustyce, temperaunce, and strength. Prudence is goodly wisdome in knowyng of thynges. Strength voydeth al aduersitees alyche euen. Temperaunce distroyeth bestiall lyuinge, with esy bearinge. And iustice right fully iugeth, and inginge departeth to euery wight that is his owne. The thirde spece turneth in to reason of vnderstandyng, al thynges to be sayd forth and discussed, & that in two thinges is deuyded: one is art, another is rethorike, in which two al lawes of mans reason ben grounded or eis mayntayned. And for thys booke is al of loue, and therafter beareth his name, and philosophie and lawe muste here to accorden by their clergial discriptions: as philosophie for loue of wisdome is declared: Lawe for mayntenynaunce of peace is holden, and these with loue must nedes acorde, therfore of hem in this place haue I touched. Ordre of honest thinges & honest maner of liuinge in vertue, with right ful iugemẽt in causes & profitable administracion in communalties of realmes & cities, by cunnyng profitably to raigne, nat by singuler auauntage ne by priuy enuy, ne by solem purpose in coueitise of worship or of goodes, ben disposed in opẽ rule shewed, by loue philosophy, & lawe, & yet loue tokeneth al other. Wherfore as sulerne in vnite they acorden &

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one ende that is peace & rest, they causen nouȝt lyuynge, & in the ioye mayntenen to endure. Nowe than, as I haue declared: my boke accordeth with descripcio of thre thinges, & the Margarit in vertue is likened to philosophy, with ỳ thre speces. In whiche matters euer twey ben acordaunt with bodily reson, & the thirde with the soule: But in cōclusyon of my boke & of this Margarite peerle in knyttyng togider lawe by thre sōdre maners shalbe lykened, that is to saye, lawe, right, & custome, whiche I wol declare: al that is law cometh of goddes ordinaūce by kyndely worchyng, & thilke thynges ordained by mās wittes arne ideped right, which is ordayned by many maners & in cōstitution writren: But custome is a thing that is accepted for right or for law, ther as law and right faylen, & there is no difference, whether it come of scipture or of reason. Wherfore it shewth that lawe is kindly gouernaunce: right cometh out of mānes probable reason: & custome is of comen sage by length of tyme vsed, & custome nat writte is vsage, & if it be writte cōstitution it is ywrytten & ycleped: But lawe of kynde is comen to euery nation, as cōiunccion of man and woman in loue, succession of children inheritāce restitucion of thyng by strength take or lent, and this lawe among al other halte the soueraynest gree in wurshyp, whiche lawe began at the begynnynge of reasonable creature, it varyed yet neuer for no chaungyng of tyme: cause forsothe in ordayning of lawe, was to constrayne mens hardynesse in to peace, and withdrawyng his yuel wyl, and turning malyce in to goodnesse, and that innocence liuerly withouten teneful anoye amonge shrewes safely might inhabite by protection of safeconducte, so that shrewes harme for harme by bridle of ferdenesse shulden restrayne. But forsothe in kyndely lawe nothynge is cōmended, but such as goddes wyl hath confirmed, ne nothynge denyed but cōtrarousitie of goddes wyl in heuen: eke thanne al lawes or custome, or els cōstitution by vsage or writinge that cōtrarien law of kynde, vtterlye ben repugnaunt and aduersary to our goddes wyll of heuen. Trewly lawe of kynde for goddes own lusty wyl is verily to maintayne, vnder whiche lawe (& vnworthy) bothe professe and reguler arne obediencer and bounden to this Margarite perle, as by knotte of loues statutes and stablyshment in kynde, whiche that goodly maye not ben withsetten. Lo vnder this bonde am I constrayned to abyde, and man vnder lyuynge lawe ruled: by that lawe oweth after deseртes to be rewarded by payn or by mede, but ỳ mercye meyne the payne: so than be parte, reasonfully may be sey, that mercy both right and lawe palleth, thentent of al these matters is the left clere vnderstanding, to were at thende of this third boke ful knowyng thorow goddes grace, I thinke to make neuer the later, yet if these thynges han a good and a sleight inseet, whiche that canne souke hony of the harde stone, oyle of the dure rocke, may lightly sele nobley of matter in my leude ymagynacyon closed. But for my boche shal be of ioye as I sayd & I so ferre set fro thilke place, fro whens gladnes shuld come my cord is to short to let my boket ouȝt catch of that water, & few men be abouten me cord be to eche, & manye ful purpose ben redy it shorter to make, & to enclose thenter, that my boket of toy nothyng shulde catch, but empty returne, my careful sorowes to encrese, & if I dye for payn, that were glaunce at their herte. Good lorde sende me water in to the cop of these mountaynes, & I shal drinke therof, my thrustes to stāch: & sey these be celestrable welles in to helth of goodnesse of my saueour am I holpen, And yet I saye more, the boule of ioye to me is not opened. Nowe dare me so reuful goost than in anye maner of gladnesse thynken to trete for euer sobbynges & complayntes be redy retrete in his mediacions as werbles in manyfold sloudes cōmynge about I not than. And therfore what maner of ioye coude endure, but yet at dore shal I knocke, if the key of Dauid weilde the locke vnshet & bring me in, which that childrēs tonges both openeth & closeth. Whose scripture, whot be wel worcheth, departing goodly as hym lyketh.

Now to goddes laude & reuerence, profyt of ỳ teders, amēdement of maners of ỳ heters encreesyng of worshyp amonge loues seruauntes, releuyng of my hert in to grace of my iewel & frendshyp plesaunce of this perle. I am stered in thys makyng, & for nothing els: & if any good thyng to mēnes liking in this scripture be foūde, thanketh the maister of grace, which ỳ of that good & all other is auctheur, & principal doer. And if any thyng be insufficiēt or els myslyking, wish ỳ that the ieudnesse of myne vnable cōning, for body in disease anoyeth the vnderstāding in soule. A diseasy habitacion

tacion letteth ꝑ wittes many thynges, a name ly in sorowe. The custome neuer the later of loue, be longe time of seruyce in termes I thik to pursue, which ben lykely to yeue vnderstã dynge in other thynges. But now to enforme the of this Margarites goodnes, I may her not halfe preyse. Wherfore not the for my boke, but this boke for her is worthy to be cõ mended, tho my boke be lewde: right as thinges nat for places, but places for thynges ought to be desyred and praysed.

NOw (qõ loue truely thy wordes I haue wel vnderstõde. Certes me thinketh hem right good, a me wondreth why ꝑ so lyghtly passest in the lawe. Soothly (qõ I) my wyt is lewde a I am right blinde a that matter depe, howe shuld I than haue waded, lightly mizt I haue drenched a spilt ther my selfe. Yea (qõ she) I shal helpe ꝑ to scape. For rizt as lawe punisheth brekers of preceptes, a the cõtrary doers of the writen constitutions: right so a reward, lawe rewardeth a yeueth mede to hẽ that lawe strengthen. By one lawe this rebel is punished a this innocent is mede, ꝑ thefe is emprisoned a this rizt full is corowned. The same lawe that forneth by wedlok without forsaking, ꝑ same lawe yeueth libel of depar tition by cause of dyuorse both demed a decla red. Ye ye (qõ I) I fynde in no lawe to mede and rewarde in goodnes, ꝑ guilte of desertes. Fole (qõ she) guilte cõuerted i your lawe, my sel meryte deserueth. Also Paule of Rome was corowned, ꝑ by him the mayntenors of Pompeus weren knowẽ a distroyed: a yet to forn was this Paulyn chefe of Pompeus cõ saile. This lawe in Rome hath yet his name of mesurynge in mede, the bewrayeng of ꝑ con spyracy, ordayned by the senatours the deth. Julius Cesar is acõpted in to Catons right wisnesse, for euer in trouth florisheth hys na me amõge the knowers of reason. Perdicas was corowned in ꝑ herrage of Alexãder the great, for tellynge of a priuy hate that kynge Porrus to Alexander hadde. Wherfore euery wight by reason of lawe after his right wise nes apertly his mede may chalenge: a so thou that mayntenest lawe of kynde, a therfore disease hast suffred in ꝑ lawe, reward is wor thy to be rewarded a ordayned, a apertly thy mede might thou chalege. Certes (qõ I) this haue I wel lerned, a euer hensforward I shal draw me therafter in ouched of wil to abyde this lawe both maynteyn a kepe, a so hope I best entre in to your grace, wel deseruinge in o worthip of a wight, without nedeful copu lation, ought medefully to be rewarded. Truly (qõ Lone) that is sothe, a tho by constitution good seruice i to profite a auauntage stretch, ri tetly many men it demen to haue more desert of mede, than good wil nat copelled. Se now (qõ I) howe may men holde of this ꝑ contra ry. And what is good seruyce of you wolde I here this question declared. I shall say the (qõ she) in a fewe wordes, resonable workyn ges in plesaunce a profyte of thy souerayne. How shuld I this performe (qõ I) right wel (qõ she) a here me nowe alyte. It is hardely (qõ she) to vnderstãde that right as mater by due ouerchaungiges foloweth his perfectiõ a his forme: right so euery man by rizt full werk kynges ought to folowe ꝑ leful desyres i his hert, a so to forn to what ẽde he deserueth, for many times he that loketh nat after thendes, but vtterly therof is vnknowen, befalleth of ten many yuels to don, wherthrough er he be ware shamefully he is confoũded, thende ther of neden to be before loked to euery desirer of suche forsight i good seruice thre thinges spe cially nedeth to be rulers in his workes. First that he do good, next ꝑ he do by election i his owne hert, a the thirde that he do godly with outẽ any surquedrie in thoughtes. That your werkes shulden be good in seruyce or in any other actes, authorites many may be aleged neuer the latter, by reson thus may it be shew ed. If your workes be cleped seconde, a mo uen in vertue of the firste werche, whiche in good workes wrought you to procede, a rizt so your werkes mouen in to vertue of the last ende, a right in the first worksynge were nat, no man shulde in the seconde werche. Right so but ye feled to what ende a sen their goodnes closed, ye shuld no more retch what ye wrought ben the gynnyng gan with good, a there shal it cease in the last ende, if it be wel consydred. Wherfore the myddle, if other wayes it drawe than acordaunt to thendes, there slyuerth the course of good, a another maner course en treth, a so it is a partie by him selue, a euerre pert be nat accordãt to his al, is foule a ouzt to be eschewed, wherfore euery thig that is wrozt a be nat good, is nat accordãt to thẽ des of his al hole, it is foule, a ouzt to be with draw. Thus ꝑ persons that neither don good ne harme, shamen foule their makyng: Wher

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fore without working of good actes in good seruice, may no man ben accepted. Trewly ȳ like ȳ han might to do good & done it not, the crowne of worthyp shal be take from hem, & wshame shul they be anulled. And so to make one werke acordant to his endes, euery good seruaunte by reason of consequence muste do goodnedes Certes it sufficeth not alone to do good. but goodly withal folowe, the thake of goodnesse els is nought he deserueth: For tixt es all your beyng come fro the greatest good in whom al goodnesse is closed. Tixt so your endes ben directe to the same good. Aristotell determyneth that ende & good ben one, and cō nertible in vnderstādyng, and he that wyll doth away good, & he that loketh not to thēd loketh not to good, but he that doth good and doth not goodly, draweth away thy directiō of thende not goodly, must nedes be bad. Lo badde is nothing els, but absence or negatife of good, as derkenesse is absence or negatyue of lyght. Than he that doth goodly, directeth thilke good in to thende of badde: So muste thyng nat good folowe, ehe badnesse to suche folke ofte foloweth. Thus cōtrariaunt workers of thende that is good, ben worthy ȳ cōtrary of thēde that is good to haue. How qō I may any good dede be done, but if goodly it helpe. Yes qō Loue the deuyl dothe many good dedes, but goodly he leueth behide, for euen badly & in discretuable wyse he worketh. Wherfore the cōtrary of thend him foloweth. And dothe neuer so many good dedes, bicause goodly is away, his goodnes is not rekened. Lo than tho a mā do good, but he do goodly thende in goodnesse woll not folowe, & thus in good seruice both good dede & goodly don musten toyne togider, & that it be done with free choise in hert: & els deserueth he nat ȳ me rite in goodnes, that wol I proue. For if thou do any thyng good by chaūce or by happe, in what thing art thou therof worthy to be com mēded for nothing by reason of that turneth in to thy praysing ne lackyng. Lo thāt thyng done by hap by thy wyll is nat caused, & ther by shulde I thanke or lacke deserue: & sythen that fayleth, thende which that well shuld re ward, must nedes faile. Clerkes sayne, no mā but wyllyng is blessed, a good dede ȳ he hath done is not done of free choice wylling, wyth out whiche blysfulnesse may nat folowe. Or go nether thāke of goodnesse ne seruice i that is cōtrary of ȳ good ende, so than to good ser uice lōgeth good dede goodly dō, thorow fre choice i hert. Trewly qō I this haue I wel vnderstande. Well qō she euery thynge thus done sufficiētly by lawe, that is cleped iustice, after reward clayme. For lawe & iustyce was ordayned in this wise, suche deseртes in good nesse after quantite in boynge, by mede to re warde, & of necessyte of suche iustyce, ȳ is to say, tixt wilnes was free choice in deserуing of wel or of yuel graūted to reasonable creatu res. Euery man hath free arbitremēt to chose good or yuel to performe. How qō I tho ff I by my good wyll deserue this Paradise perle & am therto cōpelled, & haue free choise to do what me lyketh: Shel is than bolde as me thynketh to reward thentent of my good wyll. Goddes forbode els qō Loue no wight meaneth otherwise I trowe, fre will of good hert after mede deserueth hath euery mā qō I fre choice by necessary maner of wyl leue ry of his domges, that him lyketh by goddes proper purueyaūce. I wold se that wel dede red to my leude vnderstādyng, for necessary & necessitie ben wordes of thoke entencion, dif fyng as to saye so more it be nedes, & other wyse may it nat betyde. This shalt thou lerne (qō she so thou take hede in my sprche. If it were nat in mānes owne lyberte of free wil to do good or bad, but to the one tyed by bonde of goddes preordinaūce: Than do he neuer so wel it were by nedeful cōpulsiō of that bonde and nat by fre choice, wherby nothing be de syreth, & do he neuer so yuel it were nat wil fore to wyte, but owtych to him ȳ suche thyng ordayned him to done. Wherfore he ne ought for bad be punished, ne for no good dede re warded, but of necessitie of tixtwilnesse was therfore fre choice of arbitremēt put mānes propre disposiciō: truely it it were other wyse it cōtraried goddes chartre. ȳ badnes & good nesse reward eth after desert of pain or of me de. Me thinketh this wōder qō I for god by necessitie forwote al thinges comming, and so more it nedes be: & thilke thinges that ben do be out fre choice cōmē nothig of necessitie but onely be wyll: How may this stonde toge ther: and so me thinketh truely, that fre choyce fully repugneth god des forwetyng. Trewly lady me semeth they mowe nat stande togyther.

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Thā gan loue nyghe me nere, & with a noble coũtenance of visage & limmes, dressed her nigh my sitting place. Take forth (qõ she) thy pen & redily writ these wordes, for if god wol, I shal be so enforme to ỳ, ỳ thy leudnesse which I haue vnderstãde in that mater, shal openly be clered, & thy sight in ful loking therin amẽded. First if thou thynke that godes prescience repugne liberte of arbetry of arbitrement, it is impossible that they shuld accorde in onheed of sothe to vnderstonding. Ye (qõ I forsothe so I it cõceyue. Well (qõ she) if thilk impossyble were away, ỳ repugnaũce that semeth to be therin, were vtterly remoued. Shewe me the absence of that impossibilyte qõ I. So qõ she I shal. Nowe I suppose that they mow stãd togider, prescience of god who folowyth necessite of thiges cõmig and lyberte of arbitremẽt, thorowe whiche ỳ beleuest many thiges to be without necessite. Both these proporcõs be sothe qõ I & well mow stãd togider, wherfore this case as possyble I admyt. Truely qõ she & this case is impossible. Nowe so qõ I. For herof qõ she) folowyth & wereth another ipossyble. Proue me that qõ I. That I shal qõ she for somthing is cõming wout necessite, & god wote ỳ to forn, for al thig cõming be before wot, and that be forn wot of necessite is cõmyng: as be forne wot be the case by necessary maner than, or els thorowe necessite is sothing to be without necessite, & whiderto euer wyt that hath good vnderstanding, is seen these thynges to be repugnaunt. Prescience of god, whiche ỳ folowyth necessyte & liberte of arbitremẽt, fro which is remoued necessyte, for truely it is necessary ỳ god haue forweting of thig withoutẽ any necessyte comyng. Ye quod I) but yet remeue ye not away fro myne vnderstandyng, the necessyte folowyng goddes beforne weting, as thus. God beforne wote me, in seruice of loue to be bounden to this Margarite perle, and therfore by necessite thus to loue am I bõũd, & if I nat had loued, thorow necessite had I ben kepte from al loue dedes. Certes (qõ Loue) bicause this mater is good & necessary to declare, I thinke here in wel to abyde and not lyghtly to passe. Thou shalte not (quod she) say al onely god beforne wote me to be a louer or no louer, but thus: god beforne wote me to be a louer wythoute necessyte. And so it folowyth whether thou loue or not loue, euerye of hem is and shall be. But now thou seest the impossybylite of the case, and the possibylite of thilk that thou wendest had ben impossible, wherfore the repugnaũce is annulled. Ye (quod I) and yet do ye not away the strength of necessyte, whã it is said, though necessyte it is me in loue to abyde, or not to loue without necessyte for god beforne wote it. This maner of necessyte forsothe semeth to some men in to coaction, that is to sayne, constraynyng or els prohibycion that is defendynge, wherfore necessyte is me to loue of wyll. I vnderstande me to be constrayned by some privy strength to the wil of louynge, and it no loue to be defended frome the wyl of louynge, and so thorowe necessyte me semeth to loue, for I loue, or els not to loue, if I not loue, wherthorowe neither thãke ne maugre in tho thynges may I deserue.

Nowe (quod she) thou shalte well vnderstande that often we sayne thynge thorowe necessyte to be that by no strength to be neyther is coarted ne constrayned, and throughe necessyte not to be, that wyth no defendynge is remoued, for we sayne it is thorowe necessite god to be immortal nought deedlyche, and it is necessyte god to be rightful, but not that any strẽgth of violente maner constrayneth him to be immortal, or defendeth him to be vnrightful, for nothig may make him dedly or vnrightful. Right so if I say thorowe necessite is the to be a louer or els none, only thorowe wyl, as god beforne wete. It is not to vnderstande ỳ any thyng defendeth or forbit, the thy wyl, which shal nat be, or els constrayneth it to be whiche shalbe: that same thynge forsoth god befor wot, which he beforn seeth any thing cõmende of onely wyll, ỳ wyl neyther is constrained ne defẽded thorow any other thing. And so thorow lyberte of arbytremẽt it is do, ỳ is don of wyll. And trewly my good childe, if these thniges be wel vnderstõd I wene that non inconuenyent shalte ỳ fynde betwene goddes forweting & lyberte of arbitremẽt, wherfore I wot wel they may stãd togider. Also farthermoze, who ỳ vnderstandyng of prescience properlich considereth, thorow ỳ same wyse ỳ any thing be afore wyst, is said for to be cõming it is pronoũced, there is nothing toforn wyll, but thig coming, forweting is but of trouth dout may nat be will: wherfore whan I sey that god toforn wot any thyng, thorowe necessyte is thilke thing to be comyng, al is one if I sey, it is shalbe, but

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this necessyte neither cõstrayneth ne defẽdeth any thing to be or nat to be. Therfore forthlye if loue is put to be, it is said of necessyte to be, or els for it is put not to be, it is affirmed nat to be of necessyte: not for ỳ necessyte cõstrayneth or defendeth loue to be or nat to be. For whan I say, if loue shal be of necessite it shall be, here folowerth necessite. The thing tofore put, it is as much to say, as if it wer thus pronoũced, that thing shalbe: None other thynge signifyeth this necessite but onelye thus, that shalbe may nat togider be & not be. Euẽlyche also it is sothe, loue was & is, & shalbe, nat of necessyte, & nede is to haue be al that was, & nedeful is to be al that is, & cõming to al that shalbe: & it is nat the same to saye, loue to be passed, and loue passed to be passed, or loue present to be present, and loue to be present, or els loue to be commynge, and loue commynge to be cõming: diuersite in settynge of wordes, maketh dyuersite in vnderstanding, altho in the same sentence they accordẽ of signification, right as it is nat al one: loue swete to be swete, & loue to be swete: for much loue is bitter & sorowful er herres ben eased, & yet it gladeth thilk sorowful herr on such loue to thynke. Forsothe (qõ I) otherwhile I haue had mokel blysse in herr of loue, ỳ woudinele hath me sothly anoyed: & certes lady, for I se my selfe thus knit with this Margarite perle as by bonde of youre seruice, & of no lyberte of wyl, my herr wyl nowe nat accord this seruice to loue. I can demyn in my selfe none otherwyse, but thorowe necessite am I cõstrained in this seruyce to abyde. But alas than yt I thorowe nedeful cõpulsioun maugre me be with holde, litel thãke for al my great trauel haue I than deserued. Now (qõ this lady) I saye as I sayde: We liketh this mater to declare at the full, & why: for manye men haue had dyuers fantasyes & reasons, both on one syde therof & in the other. Of whych ryst some I trowe it thou wylt vnderstode, thou shalte conceue the sentẽce, to the partie more probable by reason, & in soth knowing, by ỳ I haue of this mater maked an ende. Certes (qõ I) of these thynges longe haue I had great luste to be lerned, for yet I wene goddes wil & his prescience acordeth with my seruice, in louyng of this precious Margarite perle. After whoeuer in my herr ỳ thatthynge desire were I do bresme: bnwastynge I fagour & fade, and the day of my deth̃y in dethe or mistoye I vnbide, but yet in thende I am comforted be my supposalle in blysse, & in loye to determyne after my desyres. That thyng (qõ Loue hastely to ỳ neigh, god graũt of his grace & mercy, and this shalbe my prayer til thou be lykened in herre at thyne owne wyl. But nowe to enforme the in this mater quod this lady thou wost where I left, that was loue to be swete & loue swete to be swete, is not all one for to say: for a tree is not alway by necessite white sõtyme er it were white, it myght haue be nat whyte: & after tyme it is whyte, it may be nat whyte: But a white tree euerypoze nedeful is to be white: for neither tofore me after it was white, might it be togider white & nat white. Also loue by necessyte is nat present as nowe in the, for er it were present it might haue be that it shulde nowe nat haue be, & yet it mare be that it shal not be present: but thy loue present which to her Margarite ỳ hath bonde, nedeful is to be present. Trewly some doyng of action nat by necessyte is cõmynge here to forn it be, it may be ỳ it shall nat be cõmynge: thyng forsoth cõmynge nedeful is to be cõming, for it may nat be that cõminge shal nat be cõming. And ryst as I haue said of present and of future times, the same sentẽce in preterite is of the preterit, ỳ is to say time passed for thing passed must nedes be passed, & er it were it might haue nat be, wherfore it shall nat haue passed. Right so whã loue commynge is sayde of loue ỳ is to come, nedefull is to be that is said, for thing cõmig nedeful is nat commynge, & so ofte the same thynge we sayne of the same, as whan we sayne euerye man is a man, or euerye louer is a louer, so must it be nedes, in no waye maye be be man & no man togider. And if it be not by necessite, that is to say, nedeful al thyng cõming to be commyng, than some thyng cõming is not cõminge, and that is impossible, right as these termes nedeful, necessite, & necessarie betoken and signifye nedes to be, & it may not otherwise be. Right these termes impossyble signifieth, ỳ thyng is not & by no way may it be, than therowe yet necessyte, al thing commyng is comming, but that is by necessyte, folowerh with nothing to be constrained. Le whã that commyng is said of thinge, nat alway thyng thorowe necessite is, altho it be comyng. For if I say to morow loue is cõmyng in this Margarites herr, nat therfore thorow necessite shall ỳ the loue be, yet it may be that it shal nat be,

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alth̄o it were cōmyng. Neuerthelater, sōtime it is soth that somthing be of necessite, that is said to come: as yf I say to morowe by commynge the rysynge of the sonne. Yf therefore with necessite I pronounce cōmyng of thinge to come, in this maner loue is morne cōmyng in thyne Margarite to the warde by necessite is cōmynge, or els the rysynge of the sonne to morne cōmynge, through necessyte is commynge. Loue sothely, whiche maye not be of necessyte alone folowynge, thorowe necessite cōminge it is made certayne. For futur of future is said, þ is to sayn cōmyng of cōmynge is said: as if to morowe commyng is thorow necessyte cōminge it is. Ytsyng of the sonne thorowe two necessites in cōmyng, it is to vnderstāde, þ one is to forgoing necessite, which maketh thynge to be, therefore it shal be, for nedeful is that it be. Another is folowing necessite, which nothyng cōstrayneth to be, and so by necessyte it is to come, why: for it is to come. Nowe than, whan we same, that god beforn wot thing cōming nedeful is to be cōmyng, yet therfore make we not in certayne, furmore thynge to be thorow necessite commynge. Sothly thyng cōmynge maye nat be nat cōmyng by no way, for it is the same sentence of vnderstanding: as if we say thus. If god beforn wot any thing nedefull is that to be cōmynge. But yet therfore folowerh not þ prescience of god, thing thorow necessite to be cōmyng: for al tho god toforne wot al thiges cōming, yet nat therfore he beforn wot euery tyung cōming thorow necessite. Soe thinges he beforn wot coming of fre wyll out of reasonable creature. Certes qō I these tetures, nede & necessite, haue a queynt maner of vnderstādyng, they wolden bullen many mennes wittes. Therfore qō he I wol him openly declare, & more clerely than I haue tofore er I departe hense.

Here of this mater (qō he) thou shalte vnderstād, that right as it is nat nedeful god to wyne that he wyl, no more in many thynges is nat nedeful a man to wyne that he woll. And euer right as nedeful is to be what that god wol, right so to be it is nedeful that man woll in tho thynges, which that god hath put in to mannes subiection of wyllynge: as if a mā wol loue, that he loue: & if he ne wol loue, that he lone nat, & of suche other thynges in mānes disposicion. For why, nowe than that god wol may not be, whan he wol the wyl of man thorowe no necessite to be cōstrayned or els defended for to wilne, & he wol the effecte to folow the wil, than is it nedeful wil of mā to be fre, & also to be that he wol. In this maner it is soth, that thorowe necessite is mānes werke in louyng, that he wol do alth̄o he wol it nat with necessyte. (Quod I than) howe stante it in loue of thilke will, sythen men louen wyllyng of free choyce in hert. Wherfore if it be thorow necessite, I praye you ladye of an answere this question to assoyle. I wol (qō she) answere the bleuely: Right as men wyl not thorow necessite, right so is not loue of wyll thorowe necessite, ne thorowe necessyte wrought thilke same wyl: for if he wold it not with good wil, it thoulde not haue bene wrought, although that he doth it is nedeful to be doone. But if a man do synne it is nothyng els but to wil, that he shuld not: right so synne of wyl is not to be maner necessarye done, no more than wyl is necessarye. Neuerthelater this is sothe, if a man woll synne, it is necessarye him to synne, but though thilke necessyte nothing is constrayned ne defended in the wyl right so thilke thinge that for wyll wol and maye, and not maye, not wyline, and nedeful is that to wyline he maye not wyline, but thilke to wyline nedeful is, for impossible to him it is one thinge, and the same to wyline he may not wyline, but thilk to wilne nedeful is: for impossyble to him it is one thinge, and the same to wyline and not to wyline. The worthe forsothe of wyll, to whome it is yeue that it be that he hath in wyl, and that he wol not, be strarte of spontanye it is, for by spontanye wyl it is do, that is to saye with good wyll, not constrayned: than by wyll not constrayned it is constrayned to be, and that is it may not togyther be. Yf this necessyte maketh it better of wyll, which that afore they weren they might haue ben eschewed & beanned: God than, whiche þ knoweth all trouthe, and nothynge but trouthe, al these thynges as they arne spontanye or necessarye sothe, and as he seeth so they ben: and so with these thinges well considered it is open at the full, that without all maner repugnaunce, god beforne wote all maner thinges bene don by fre wyl, which afore they weren might haue ben neuer they shulde be, and yet ben they thorowe a maner necessite from fre wyl discendeth. Hereby maye (quod she) ryghtly ben knowe that not al thiges to be is of necessite, though

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god haue hem in his presence, for somthynges to be is of lyberte of wyll: and to make the to haue ful knowynge of goddes beyonge hering, here me (quod he) what I shall say. Myghty lady (quod I) me lyst this matter entirely to vnderstande. Thou shalte (quod she) vnderstande, that in heuen is goddes beynge, although he be ouer all by power, yet there is abydynge of deuyne person, in whiche heuen is euerlastynge presence, without any mouable tyme there, sole haue I not sayd to forn this, as time hurteth, right so aye wardly time healeth and rewardeth: and a tree oft sayled, is holde more in beynge whan it frute forthe bringeth. I warrant me that for ones lesynge in the see no more to auenture thynketh, he shall neuer with auenture come to richelle: so ofte must men on the oke sumpte, ryght the happy dene haue ouerd, which with the ofte ouerwaye maketh it to come al at ones. So ofte falleth the lethy water on the harde rocke, ryght haue the lowe perfect it. The euen draught of the wyse drawer, maketh the wyne to ben euen and supple wetchynge, and if he stered in his draught, the wyne breaketh a sonder. Euery ere wel springeth, whan it is wel grouded and not often remoued. But shall this frute be odd I now it greueth sore (quod she) in parfyte loue to endure, and therwith thou begon. Grace quod I me thynketh I shulde haue a rewarde for my longe trauayle. I shall (quod she) termynation of thy good trayles to haue of thy Margarite perle, it beareth not the name of mede, but ouely of good grace, and that cometh not of thy deserte, but of thy Margarites goodnesse, and perfite alone. Quod I shulde all my longe trauayle haue no rewarde but the lowe grace, and forgyue me your felowship, right wyse lady, euery true wayfarer rewardeth to gyue one benefyce for another. Charite (quod she) one euer as I sayde, as to him that hathe good, to whiche to hope he were neuer holden me yet continued. Charite (quod I) I trowe quod she I all that ouer thou hast thyne Margarite perle, of hyr, of loue, and of reuerence thou owest to done it, yet is it nothynge els but yelding of mede in quytynge of thy grace, whiche the lorde whan ye first mette I wene quod I right hie grace to me he delyuered. Certes it was harde grace, it hath myche me affrayed. Charite (quod she) good grace I wot wel it was

it graunted thou departe hence. If any man yeue to another wight to whō that he ought not, and whyche that of him selfe nothynge maye haue, a garnement or a cote, though he weare the coate or els thyn clothig, it is not to put to him that was naked by cause of his clothyng, but only to him that was yeuer of the garnement. Therefore I sare, thou that were naked of loue, and of thy selfe non haue mightest, it is not to put to thyne, o ryne persone, sythen thy loue came thorow thy Margarite perle. Ergo he was yeuer of the loue although thou it bie, and there fore he the grace that seruyce to begynne. He is to owe the thanke of euys grace, for he was the yeuer. Al the thoughtes, bely bornges, and pleasaunces in thy mynde and in thy wordes that thou canste deuyse, ben but right lyttel quantynge of thy deserte, and be not ben, sothe to sayde had not ben studied. So all these marcis kyndely drawen home warde to this Margarite perle, for fro thence were they borowed, al is holly her to wynne the loue that thou vnderstand thus quyte thou the dette, in that thou dedaffly fruest. And kepe well that loue I yeue the at her thou hast borowed, and plese in her seruyce for her to quite, and that arte thou able right soone to haue grace, wherfor after more in mynde to take. Thus the grauntyng and endowynge is not grace alone, and in him good be trusty, for deserte thou aquyte vnlyous grace is neuer more what seruyce thou, vnlesse the Margarite of her greate grace for to serue the hath guyded, and plaste her of loue in the tenders breastes, and [illegible] grace ouercome. Grace glorie and honour is to synge thorow god to ses deserues, and be yeuyng of grace therin builded. [illegible] more or more ioye than [illegible] parfyte charite, whose god [illegible] that well came beleue [illegible] Quod I gan hence, and I wolde se the [illegible] medyuynge whyle me lyste here [illegible] Quod she, and neuer more

erned ho we vertues shulden ben knowen, in whiche thinges I hope to God here after the shall me enfourmen, and namelye sythen her restynge place is nowe so nyghe at my wyll: and anon al these thinges that this lady said, I remembred me by my selfe, and revolued the lynes of myne vnderstondyng wyttes.

Tho found I fully al these matters partyte-lye there wryten, howe mysse rule by fayned loue both realmes and cuyes hath governed a great throwe. Howe lyghtly me myght the fautes espye, howe rules in loue shulde bene vsed, howe somtyme wyth fayned loue soule I was begyled, howe I shulde loue haue knowe, and how I shall in loue with my fer-ther procede. Also furthermoze I founde of perdurable letters wodderly there graue, these matters whiche I shal nempne. Certes none age ne other thinge in erthe may the leest syl-lable of this in no poynte deface, but clerelye as the sonne in myne vnderstandynge soule they shynen. This maye neuer oute of my mynde, howe I maye nat my loue kepe, but therowe wyllynge in herte: Wyne to loue maye I not, but I louynge haue. Loue haue I none but throwe grace of thys Margarite perle. It is no maner doute, that wil wol not loue but for it is louyng, as wyl woll not rightefully, but for it is rightful it selue. Also wyllis not louynge for he woll loue, but he woll loue for he is louynge: it is al one to wil to be louynge, and louynges in possessyon to haue. Right so wyl woll not loue, for of loue hath he no partie, & yet I denye not louynge wyll wyne more loue to haue, which that he hath not whan he wolde more than he hath, but I saye he maye no loue wyne, yf he no loue haue, through which thilke loue he shulde wyne: but to haue thys louyng wyll may no man of him selfe, but onely through grace to-forne goyng: Right so maye no man it kepe, but by grace folowynge. Consyder nowe e-uery man aryght, and let sen it þ any wyghte of him selfe mow this louing wel get, and be therof first nothinge haue: for yf it shoulde of him selfe spring, eyther it must be wyllyng or not wyllyng. Wyllyng by him selfe may he it not haue, sythen him fayleth the matter that shulde it forth bringe, the mater him fayleth: Why he may therof haue no knowynge, tyll whan grace put it in his hert. Thus wyllyng by him selfe may he it not haue, and not wyl-lyng may he it not haue. Parde euery conseyt of euery reasonable creature otherwyse will not graunt: Wyl in affyrmatife with not wyl lyng by no way mowe acorde. And although this louing wol come in mans hert by frenesse of arbytrement, as in this boke fullye is she-wed, yet owe I not therfore as moche alowe my frewil, as grace of that Margarite to me leaned, for neither might I without grace to forn goyng, and afterward folowyng, thilke grace get ne kepe, and lese shal I it neuer but if frewyll it make, as in wyllynge otherwyse than grace hath me graunted. For ryght as whan any person taketh wylling to be sobre, and throweth þ away, wyllynge to be dronke, or els taketh wil of drinking oute of mesure: whiche thing anon as it is done, maketh thorowe his own gylte by frewil that leseth his grace. In which thinge therfore vpon the no-bley of grace I mote trusten, & my besye cure set thilke grace to kepe, that my frewil other-wyse than by reason it shulde werche, cause not my grace to voyde: for thus must I bothe loke to frewyl and to grace. For right as na-turell vsage in engendrynge of chyldren may not ben without father, ne also but with the mother, for neyther father ne mother in be-gettyng maye it lacke: right so grace and fre-wyll accorden, and without hem bothe may not louyng wyl in no partie bene getten. But yet is not frewyl in gettynge of that thinge so moket thake worthy as is grace, ne in the ke-pynge therof, so muche thanke deserueth, and yet in gettynge and kepynge bothe done they accorde. Trewly often tyme grace frewyl hel peth in fordoynge of contrarye thinges, that to wyllynge loue not accorden, and then the wyll aduersyrees to wythsit, wherfore al to-gyther to grace oweth to bene accepted, þ my writing deserueth: Frewyl to louyng in this wyse is accorded. I remembre me wel howe all this booke (who so hede taketh) consyde-reth al thinges to werchinges of mankynde euenly accordeth, as in turnyng of this word loue in to trouthe, or els ryght wysenesse, whe ther that it like. For what thing that falleth to man in helpyng of free arbitrement, thilke right wysenesse to take or els to kepe, therowe whiche a man shal be saued, of whiche thyng all this booke mencion hath maked, in euery poynte therof grace oweth to be thanked.

Wherfore I saye, euery wight þ hauynge thys right wysenes ryghtful is, and yet therfore I fele not in my conscience, that to al rightfulis

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behoten the blysse euerlastynge, but to hem that ben rightful without any vnrightfulnesse. Some manne after some degree may rightfully ben accompted: as chalke meane in layenge, and yet ben they iaugleres and ful of enuye pressed: to hem shal thys blysse neuer ben deliuered. For right as very blisse is without al maner nede, rizt so to no man shal it be yeuen but to the ryghtful, voyde from al maner vnrightfulnesse founde, so no man to her blysse shal ben folowed, but he be ryghtfull, and with vnrightfulnesse not bounde, and in that degree fully be knowe. This rightfulnesse in as muche as in hym selfe is, of none yuel it is cause, and of all maner goodnesse trewly it is mother. This helpeth the spirit to withstitte the leude lustes of fleshly lykynge: This strengtheth and mayntayneth the law of kynde, and if that otherwhyle me weneth harme of this precious thing to folowe, therthroughe is nothynge the cause, of somwhat els cometh it aboute who so taketh hede. Ry ryghtfulnesse forsoth werne many holy sayntes good fauour i swetnesse to god almighty but that to some folkes they were fauour of dethe in to deedly ende, that come nat of the sayntes rightwysnesse, but of other wycked mennes badnesse hath proceded. Trewly the like wyl, whiche that the lady of loue me lerned, affection of wyl to nempne, whiche is in willyng of profytable thinges, yuel is it not, but whan to fleshly lustes it cõsenteth, avenst reason of soule: But that thys thynge more clerely be vnderstãd, it is for to know, whẽe and howe thilke wyl is so vicious and so redye, yuel dedes to perfourme. Grace at the gynnynge ordayned thilke wyl in goodnesse euer to haue endured, and neuer to badnesse haue assented: Herme shulde not byleue, that God thilke wyl maked to be vycious. Oure fulle father as Adam and Eue, for vycyous appetytes and vicyous wyl to suche appetytes consentynge, ben not on thynge in kynde, other thynge is done for the other. And howe this wil fulfil in to man yt assented, I holde it profytable to shewe: but if the full condycion of reasonable creature wol be vnderyzed and openly loked, lyghtly the cause of suche wyl may ben shewed. Intencion of god was that rightfully and blessed shulde reasonable nature ben maked, hym selfe for to kepe, but neuer blyssful ne ryghtfull myght it not be, but outen wyl in them bothe. Wyl of ryghtfulnesse is thylke same rightfulnesse, as here toforne is shewed: but wyl of blysse is not thilke blisse, for euery manne hath not thylke blysse, in whom the wyl therof is abydynge. In this blysse after euery vnderstandinge is fulfylsaunce of conenable comodytees without any maner nede, whether it be blysse of aungels or els thylke, that grace fyrst in paradise suffred Adam to haue. For although aungels blysse be more than Adams was in paradyse, yet maye it not be demed, that Adam in paradyse ne had fulfylsaunce of blysse: for ryght as great herte is without al maner of coldenesse, and yet may another herte more heate haue, right so nothyng defended Adam in paradyse to been blissed without al maner nede. Al thoughe aungels blysse be more more, forsothe it folweth nat for the same another to haue therefore hym nedeth, but for to wante a thynge whiche that behoueth to ben had, that may nede ben cleped, and that was nat in Adam at the fyrst gynnynge. And the Purgatyre werin what I mene. For sothe where as is nede, there is wretchednesse, good without cause to forsaking not reasonable creature [illegible] vnderstande and loue hadde he the maner. God made therfore man blysful without maner indigence, to gether and a reasonable creature blysse, and fedenesse, and wyl of ryghtfulnesse it selue, and [illegible] rightfulnesse it selue, and [illegible] ment that is the wil with [illegible] fulnesse may be kept and [illegible] wyle ordayned thilke [illegible] that [illegible] that [illegible] mentours [illegible] nesse, by teaching of his soule [illegible] of gouernaunce, in thought and [illegible] and that it shulde vse the [illegible] manet, without [illegible] to [illegible] but rightfulnesse [illegible] it self, which yf he not [illegible] but [illegible] ryne [illegible] that [illegible] the auauncement into the [illegible] of angels, in which [illegible] by in self for warde shulde [illegible] warde receiue: and as wel the blisse that he was in as angels blisse that to [illegible] was comyng, shulde be [illegible] and be [illegible] them bothe. And thus [illegible]

to lykeneſſe of vnreaſonable beſtes, and with hem to corrupcion & vnluſtes apetytes was he vnder thowen, but yet wyl of blyſſe dwel leth, that by iudygence of good whiche that he loſt through great wrecchedneſſe, by right ſhulde he ben punished. And thus for he weyued rightfulneſſe, loſte hath he his blyſſe: but fayle of hys deſier in his own comodite may he not, and werr comodites to his reaſonable nature whiche he hath loſte may he not haue. To falſe luſtes, whiche ben beſtial apperites he is turned: foſye of vncomyng hath him be gyled, in wenyng þ thilke ben the comodytes that owen to ben deſyred. Thys affection of wyl by lyberte of arbitrement is enduced to wyne thus thing that he ſhulde not, and ſo is wil not maked yuel but vnrightful, by abſence of rightfulneſſe, whiche thing by reaſon euer ſhulde he haue. And freneſſe of arbytrement may he not wyne, whan he it not haueth, for whyle he it had, thilke helpe it not to kepe: ſo that without grace may it not ben recouered. Wyl of cómodyte, in as muche as vnrightful it is maked, by wyllynge of yuel luſtes, wyl ſyng of goodneſſe may he not wyne: for wyl of inſtrument to affection of wyl is thralled, ſythen that other thyng may not it wyne, for wyl of inſtrument to affection deſyreth, & yet ben both they wyl cleped: for that inſtrument wyl, through affection it wyneth, & affection deſyreth thilke thing whereto inſtrument him lederh. And ſo frewel to vnluſty affection ful ſeruaunt is maked, for vnrightfulneſſe may he not releue, & without rightfulneſſe ful fre dome may it neuer haue. For kyndely ly berty of arbytrement without it, beyne and ydel is forſoth. Wherfore yet I ſay, as often haue I ſayd the ſame, whan inſtrument of wyl loſte hath rightfulneſſe, in no maner but by grace may he ayen recouure rightfulneſſe to wyne. For ſythen nothynge but rightfulneſſe alone ſhulde he wine, what þ euer he wilneth with out rightfulneſſe, vnrightfully he it wylneth. Theſe than vnrightful apperites & vnthrifty luſtes which þ ſlyes deſyreth, in as muche as they ben in kynde, ben they not bad, but they ben vnrightfull and badde, for they ben in reſonable creature, where as they beynge in no wayſe ſhulde ben ſuffred. In vnreaſonable beeſtes neither ben they yuel ne vnrightful, for there is their kynde beyng.

Knowen maye it wel ben nowe, of theſe thinges toforne declared, þ mã hath not alway thilk rightfulnes, which by dute of right euermore hauen he ſhulde, and by no way by him ſelf may he it get ne kepe, & after he it hath if he it leſe, recouer ſhal he it neuer, without eſpecial grace: wherfore the comune ſentence of the people in opynion, that euery thynge after deſtenye is ruled, falſe and wicked is to bylyue: For thoughe predeſtynacion be as wel of good as of badde, ſythen that it is ſayde god hadneſt made, whiche he neuer ne wrought, but for he ſuffreth hem to be maked as that he hardeth whan he nought miſſayth, or ledde in to temptacion whan he not delyuereth, wherfore it is none inconuenient if in that maner be ſaid, god toforne haue deſtenyed bothe badde, and her badde werkes, whan hem ne their yuel dedes neyther amendeth, ne therto hem grace leueth. But ſpecyallyche predeſtynacion of goodneſſe alone, is ſayde by theſe great clerkes, for in hym god doth that they ben, and that in goodnes they werchen. But the negatyfe herof in badneſſe is holden, as the lady of loue hath me lerned, who ſo aught in thys booke loketh. And verily it is to weten, that predeſtynacion properly i god may not ben demed, no more than beforn weting. For in the chapitre of goddes beforne weting, as loue me reherſed, al theſe maters apertely maye ben founden. Althynges is god ben aowe togyther & in preſence burynge. Trewly preſcience and predeſtynacion in nothynge diſacorden, wherfore as I was lerned howe goddes beforeweting and fre choyce of wyll mowe ſtonden togyther, me thinketh the ſame reaſon me leadeth, that deſtenye and frewyl acorden, ſo that neyther of hem bothe to other in nothing contrarieth. And reaſonablyche may it not ben demed, as often as any thing falleth frewyl werchyng, as if a man another man wrongefully anoyeth. wherfore he hym ſleeth, that it be ordeyned to that ende, as mo well folke crey n and ſayth: Lo, as it was deſtenyed of god toforn know, ſo it is thorowe neceſſite fal, and other wyſe might it not betide. Trewly neyther he that the wong wrought, ne he that hym ſelf benged none of thyſe thynges thorowe neceſſite wrought; for yf that with frewyl hert had it not wylled neyther had it wrought that he perfourmed: and to vtterly grace that for wyllyn goodneſſe bryngeth and kepeth, and

to

fro badnesse it tourneth, in all thynge moste thanke deserueth. Thys grace maketh sentence in vertue to abyde, wherfore in body and in soule in ful plentie of comynge after their good deseruyng in the euerlastyng ioye, after the day of dome shul they endelesse dwel, and they shul ben lerned in that kyngdome with so mokel affecte of loue and of grace, that the lest ioye shal of the greatest in glorye reioyce and ben gladded, as yf he the same ioye had. What wonder sith god is ꝑ greatest loue, and the ne ought to loke thynges with resonning to proue, a so is instrumente of wyl, wyl: and yet varyeth he from effecte a vsing bothe. Affection of wyl also for wyl is cleped, but it varyeth from instrument in this maner wise, by that name, lyche whan it cometh into mynde anon right it is in wyllynge desyred, and the negatyfe therof with wylling my not accorde: this is closed in herte, thoughe vsage and instrument slepe. This sleepeth whan instrumēt and vs waken: and of suche maner affection trewely some man hath more and some man lesse. Certes trewe louers wenen euer therof to lytel to haue. False louers in lytel wenen haue ryght mokell: Lo instrument of wyl in false and trewe bothe euen lych is proporcioned, but affection is more in some place than in some, bycause of goodnesse that folowyth and that I thynke hereafte to declare. Vse of this instrumēt is wyl, but it taketh his name whan wilned thing is in doyeng. But verely grace to catch in thy blysse, desyred to ben rewarded. Thou muste haue than affection of wyl at the ful, and vse whan his tyme asketh wysely to ben governed. Sothly my disciple without feruent affection of wyl may no man ben saued: thys affection of good seruyce in good loue, maye not ben grounded, without feruent desyre to the thynge in wyl coueyted. But he that neuer retcheth to haue or not to haue, affection of wyl in that hath no restyng place. Wherfor whan thing cometh to minde and it be not taken in hede to comyn or not come, therfore in that place affection fayleth: a for thylke affection is so lytel, therow whiche in goodnesse he shulde come to hys grace, the lytelnesse wyl it not suffre to auayle by no way in to hys helpes: Certes grace and reson thilke affection foloweth. This affection with reason knytte, diureth in euerychē trewe herte, and euermore is encreasynge, no fortunes, no strength may it remoue while truthe in herte abideth. Sothly whan falsheed gynneth entre, truth drawyth away, grace, and ioy both: but than thilk falsheed that trouth hath thus boyded, hath vnknit the bonde of vnderstandyng reason, betwene wyl and the herte. And who so that bonde vndoth, and vnknitteth wyl to be in other purpose than to the first accorde, knytteth hym with contrary of reason, and that is vnreason. Lo, than wyl and vnreson bringeth a man from the blisse of grace, which thing of pure kynde, euery man ought to shonne a to eschewe, and to the knot of wil and reason confyrme. Wyt thynketh (qd she) by thy studiēt lokes, thou wenest in these wordes me to contrarie, from other sayinges here tofore in other place, as whan thou were forthynne in affection of wil, to thinges that now han brought the in disease, which I haue the counsayled to voyde, and thyn herte discouer, and there I made thy wyl to ben chaunged, which now thou wenest I argue to vnbold and to kepe. Shortly I say ꝑ reuers in these wordes may not ben foude: for though drunkenesse be forboden, men shul not alway ben drunkelesse. I trowe right for thou thy wil out of reason shulde not tourne, thy wyl in reason shulde not vnbynde. I saye thy wyl in thy first purpose with vnreason was closed. Construe forth of the remnaunte what the good lyketh. Trewly that wyl a reson shulde be knyt togyder was fre wyl of reason, after tyme thyne herte is assentaunt to them both, thou might not chaunge, but if thou from rule of reason vary. In whiche varyaunce to come to thilke blisse desired, contrariously thou wenest: and nothynge may knowe wyl a reason but loue alone. Than yf thou vnbynde loue, thou wenest the bonde that knytteth, and so nedes or els right lightly, that other gen a sondre, wherfore thou seest apertly that loue holdeth this knot, and amaystreth hem to be vnbounde. These thynges, as a ringe in circuit of wyrth ben knyt in thy soule without departynge. Be it, let be, qd I, it nedeth not of this more herfayle to make, my soule is yet in parfyte blysse, in thynkyng of that knotte.

NOwe trewly lady I haue my grounde wel vnderstond, but what thig is thilke spire that in to a tree shulde were: Expowne me that thyng, what ye therof meane. That shal I qd she blythlye, and take good hede to the wordes I the rede. Continuaunce

with?

in thy good seruyce, by longe processe of tyme in ful hope abyding, without any chaunge to wyne in thyn herte: this is the spire, whiche if it be wel kept and gouerned, shal so hugely springe, tyl the fruite of grace is plentuously out sprongen: For al thoughe thy wyl be good, yet may not therfore thilk blisse desired hastely on the diseden, it must abide his seasonable tyme. And so by processe of growing, th thy good trauayle, it shall in to more & more ioye, tyll be founde so mighty, that woundes of yuel speche, ne stormes of enuye, make nat the trauayle ouerthrowe, ne trosses of mystrust, ne bayles of iealousye right tyrel myght haue in hardynge of suche springes. Euery yonge sterling lightly with smal stormes is ouerd, but whan it is more sondele & greatnesse, than han great blastes & weathers but it sel might, any disauauntage to ben for to wet the Fyne ouene soueraine lady qd I and wende of myne herte, and it were lykyng vnto your noble grace, therthrough nat to be displeased, I suppose ye weten, nowe yt maken iealousye enuy, & discourdour to ben thar ben your seruauntes. I haue ierned ofte tofore this time, that in euery louers herte, great plente of iealousies grenes ben sow, wherfore me thynketh ye ne ought in no maner accompte, shilde thynge amonge these other medled with nets and venemous serpentes, as enuye, mystrust, & yuel speche. O foole qd she mystrust with folye with yuel myl medled, engendreth yuel ked pasde. Certes if they were destroyed iealousy vndone were for euer, & yet some maner of iealousy I wot wel is euer to byn al the herres of my treme seruauntes as thus: to be iealous euer hi self, lest he be cause of his owen disease. This iealousy in ful thought euer shulde be kept for fer dneste to lese his loue by mistheyng, throwe his owne boyng in lewdnesse, or els thus: Lest the that thou seruest so fer nently is beset there her better lyketh, that of al thy good seruyce she compteth nat a cresse. These iealousies in herte for acceptable qualytees ben demed: these oughten euery trew louer by kyndely, euermore haue in his mynde, tyl fully the grace & blisse of my seruice be on him discended at wil. And he yt than iealousy catcheth, or els by wenynge of his owne folythe wylfulnesse mystrusteth, trewly with fantasy of venyme, he is foule begyled. Yuel wyl hath groūded thilke mater of sorowe in his leude soule, & yet nat for than to euery wight shulde me not trust, ne euery wight fully misbeleue, the meane of these thynges owen to be vsed. Soothly without cauteful cuidēce, mistrust in iealousy shulde not be wened in no wise person comenly, suche leude wickednesse shulde me nat fynde. He that is wise & with yuel wil nat be ouerred, can abyde wel his tyme, tyl grace & blisse of his seruice folowing haue hi to moket cased, as his abidinge toforthande hath hi diseased. Certes lady qd I tho of no thyng me wōdreth, sithen thilke blisse so precious is & kyndely good, & wel is & worthy in kynde, whan it is medled with loue & trasen, as ye toforn haue declared. Why, anon as he one is sprōg, why springeth not the tother & anone as the one commeth, why tarryeth not the other? for euery thyng that is out of his kyndely place, by ful appetite, euer cometh ti berward kyndely to drawe, & his kyndely being thertho him costrayneth. And yt kidly sede of this blisse, is in suche wyl medled to bondage, & nedes in that it shulde haue his kyndely being. Ac before me thinketh anon as that wyl to be shewed & kyd him profereth, thilke blisse shuld hi bye thilk wil to receyue, or els kinde of goodnesse wolden not in he as they shulde. Lo, be the sonne neuer so fers, euer it hath his kinde werching in erthe: great worth on tyle onloft caued, sinketh neuer til it come to his resting place. Ac ares to the fer warde euer ben they drawing, thig yt is light kyndely wol not sinke, but euer ascendeth & upward draweth. Thus kinde in euery thig his kindely course, & his beynge place she werth: wherfore be kide on this good wil, anon as it wel springe, this blisse shulde ther on discende, her kinde wolde they dwelle ben togyther, & so haue ye sayd your selfe. Certes quod she thou herr sitteth wōder fore this blisse for to haue, thy herte is for agreued yt tarieth so log, and if thou durste, as me thinketh by thyne wordes, this blisse wolden thou blame. But yet I say, thilke blisse is kyndely good, and his kyndely place in hat wil to inhabite. Neuer the later, their comyng togider after kindes ordinaunce nat sodainly may betyde, it must abide tyme, as kinde yeueth him leaue, for if a man, as thys wyl medled gomme hym shewe, and thilke blisse in haste folowed, so lightly coming shulde his gladly cause goyng, longe tyme of thrusting, conseth thinke to be the more delectous whan it is atasted lowe is it quod I than that so many blisse is for I

al haue

al daye at myne eye, in the fyrst moment of a fyght with suche wyll accorde. Ye, and yet other whyle with wyl assenteth, synguleryly by hym selfe there reason fayleth, trauayle was none, seruyce had no tyme. This is a queynt maner thynge, howe suche doynge cometh aboute. Quod she, that is thus, the erthe kyndely after seasons and tymes of the yere, bringeth forth innumerable herbes and trees bothe profytable and other, but suche as men ought leaue, though they were nought in no thynge to mannes kynde seruen, or els suche as tourne soone vnto mines confusyon in case that therof they araise, comen forthe out of the erthe by their own kynde, without any mannes cure or any busynesse in trauayle: and the the herbes, that to mennes lyues lobe necessarily seruen, without which good ly in this lyfe creatures no wyse may endurre, and moste be nourished to mankynde, without great trauayle great tylthe and longe abyding tyme, comen not out of the erthe, and it with seed before ordayned such herbes to make springe and forthe growe. Right so the parfyte birde, that we haue in meanynge of duryng tyme to abide may nat come to lyght, but with great trauayle & right besy ryth, and yet good seed to be sowe for of a croppe fayleth of badde herbe, be it neuer so wel trauayled. And thilke birde thou spoke of so lyght in commyng, truely is nat necessary nor abydynge: and but it the better be stamped & the venemous weede out wronged, it is lykely to empoysonen all the that therof taken. Certes right bitter be the herbes that bewen first the yere of her own kynde. And the more is the hatred that yelden many graynes, the longe and sore it hath ben trauayled. What wolden thou deme of a man wold yeue the quarters of nobles of golde, that were a precious gifte to erthes. Quod I. And what of the thee quarters ful of perles. Certes quod she that were a riche gyfte. And what quod she of as moche a sure. Quod I a precious gyfte ar ful. Certes nat quod she a noble gifte of al these at ones. In good fayth quod I for wanting of englysshe nameynge of so noble a werd, I can not forgesse nouelle yeue it a name: thy gratuly quod she hastle thou demed, and yet loue lyuyth in vertue, passeth all the golden thynges erthe. Good wyl accordant to reason, with no maner properte may be countervayled, all the assurance wolde ye nat to accounte in respecte of reason, loue that with good wyl & reason accordeth, with non erthly riches may nat ben amended. This yeft hast thou yeuen I know it my selfe & thy Margaret thilke gyft hath receyued, in whiche thynge to rewarde she hath her selfe bounde. But thy gyft as I sayd, by no maner riches may be amended, wherfore with thing that may nat be amended, shalte of thy margaretes nat nowe nelle be rewarded. Right sufficed yet neuer but euery good bede for tyme to be yolde. I wolde thy Margaret with no rewarde the quite. Right a nought more dyth thy mede in meryt wol pursue. Certes suche so dayne bisse as thou first nempest, nat worthe rewarde as yet is worthy, although at thyn eye it semeth p rewarde p beest to passe, but can after sembe suche bitternesse eusty it wore warde: so p so dayne bisse be al ayres of reason in great goodnesse may not be accompted, but bisse long, nothing it abideth, endure it wol last. Sey why thy wyfe embelle dest thou loue best euer thy best euer thereto Answer more to chaunge rewarde of suche must ben done by right than mede ne deserte grace & this bisse embelle is set to abide. Euen lyche diuerse alberth ryenlage to wedde hadest thou chaste haue, and I in suffered not than alone good wil ben meryte for reason medled, but it ben good trauayled. And so thrugge trouble come to the ende, & thus we endeth the wittnyng tree of whiche we first rede.

Now trouthe good the balle thou nowe conceyued of these thynges in more hastely shalt thou be able bet more & parfyte bysse to receyue. And now I more wolde be syst to know the manet of braunches, that out of the tree shulde sprynge. Thereof lade quod I herely I you pray. For than leue I wel, that nighe soone after I shal atayl of the fruite that I so longe haue desired. Thou hast herde quod she in what wyse this tree totorn this haue I declared, as in creed & in lloche of meryng. But the grounde shulde be the trewe ful in mynde heer, & the floche as I sayde shulde be continuance in good seruice, by long tryme in trauayle, all it were in greatnesse right wel woren. And what thy tree such greatnes hath caught as I haue rehersed: the braunches the that the fruite shulde forth bring, speche must they be nedes in power of prayer & playning wyle lyed. Our alas quod I tho be is sorowfully

fully woũded that hideth his ſpech & ſparreth his cõplaymes to make, what ſhal I ſpeke ẏ rare: but payne euen ſythe to hel, ſore hath me aſſayled, & ſo ferforthe in payne me thronge, that I leur my treis ſeer, & neuer ſhal it frute forth bring. Certes he is greatly eaſed, ẏ dare his pleuy mone diſcouer to a true felow, that cõning hath & might, wherthrough his plaint in any thig may be amẽded. And moſel more is he loued that with herte of hardyneſſe dare cõplayne to his lady, what cares that he ſuffreth, by hope of mercy wh grace to be auaunced. Truely I ſay for me, ſythe I came thys margaret to ſerue, durſt I neuer me diſcouer of no maner diſeaſe, & wel the later hath myn herte hardyed ſuche thynges to done, for the great bounties and worthy refreſhmentes ẏ the of her grace goodly whout anye deſert on my halue ofte hath me reſkened, and nere her goodneſſe the more with grace & with mercy medled, whiche paſſen all deſertes, trauayls, and ſeruynges, that I in any degre might endure, I wolde wene I ſhuld be without recouer, in gettyng of thys blyſſe for euer. Thus haue I ſtylled my diſeaſe, thus haue I couered my care, that I brenne in ſorouful anoy, as gledes & coles waſten a fyre vnd deed aſhen. Wel the hoter is the fire, that with aſhen it is ouerleyn: right long thys wo haue I ſuffred. Lo qõ Loue howe thou fareſt: me thynketh the paſſye yuel hath acomered thy wittes, as faſte as thou hieſt forwarde, anon ſodaynly backwarde thou moueſt. Shal nat yet al thy leudneſſe out of thy braynes dul ben thy ſkil ful vnderſtãdiges, thy wil hath thy wit ſo amaſtred. Woſt thou not wel qõ ſhe but euery tree in his ſeſonable tyme of burionynge ſhewe his blomes fro within, i ſigne of what fruite ſhulde out of hun ſpring, eis ẏ frute for that yere men hal: deſyuered, be the grounde neuer ſo good. And though ẏ ſtock be mighty at the ful, & the braunches ſeer & no burions ſhewe, farwel the gardiner he may pipe with an yue leſe his fruite is fayled. Wherfore thy braũches muſte burionẽ i preſẽce of thy lady, if thou deſire anye frute of thy ladyes grace, but beware of thy life, that thou no wodelay vſe, as in aſſayng of thynges that ſtretchen in to ſhame, for thã might thou not ſpede by no way that I can eſpye. Nature wol not ſuffre villany out of him ſelfe to ſpringe. Thy wordes may not be queynt ne of ſubtel maner vnderſtãdinge. Freelwitted people ſuppoſen in ſuche poeſies to be begyled, in open vnderſtãding muſt curry worde be vſed. Poyce without clere vnderſtãding of ſentẽce ſaith Ariſtotel, right nouzt priſeth i hert. Thy wordes the to abide in hert, & clene in ful ſentẽce of trewe meaning plainly muſt thou ſhewe & euer be obedient, her helles & her wyls to performe, & be thou ſet in ſuche a wit to were by a loke euer more what ſhe meaneth. And he that lyſt nat to ſpeke, but ſtylly his diſeaſe ſuffre: what wõder is it tho he neuer come to his blyſſe. Who that trauayleth vnwiſt, & coueyteth thing vnknowe, vnwetynge he ſhal be quyted, & with vnknowe thinge rewarded. Good lady qõ I thã it hath ofte be ſeine, that wethers & ſtormes ſo hugely haue fal in burionynge tyme, & by perte durſſe han beaten of the ſpringes ſo clene, wherthrough ẏ frute of thilk yere hath fayled. It is a great grace whan burions han good wethers, their frutes forth to bringe. Alas, than after ſuche ſtormes how harde is it to anoyde, tyl eſte wedring & yeres han marked her cercute courſe al about, er any frute be able to be taſted he is ſhent for ſhame, ẏ louke is rebuked of his ſpeche. He that is in fire brenning ſore ſmarteth for diſeaſe. Him thynketh full long er the water come, that ſhulde ẏ fire quenche. While men gon after a leche, the bodyes buryed. Lo how ſcarcely thys frute wexeth, me thynketh that of two frutes maye no man atayle, for pure bytterneſſe in ſauoure. In this wyſe bothe frute and tre waſten away togider, though moſel buſy occupacõ haue be ſpente to bringe it ſo ferforth that it was able to ſpring. A liel ſpech hath maked that al this labour is in dyel. I not qõ ſhe wherof it ſeruyth thy queſtion to aſſoyle, me thynketh the now duller i wittes, than whan I with the firſt mette, although a mã be leude, cõmenly for a foole he is not demed, but if he no good wol lerne, ſottes and fooles let lyghtly out of mynde, the good that men teacheth hem. I ſayd therfore thy ſtocke muſt be ſtronge, & in greatneſſe wel herted, the tree is ful feble that at the firſt dent fayleth: and al though frute faileth one yere or two, yet ſhal ſuche a ſeaſon come one tyme or other, that ſhal bring out frute that is nothyng perfect ne paſſed there is nothing future ne comyng, but al thynges togider in that place be preſent euerlaſtyng without any meuyng, wherfore to god al thynge is as nowe: & though a thyng be nat in kynde nature of thynges [illegible]

yet, and if it shulde be herafter, yet euermore we shul saye god it maketh be time present, & nowe for no future ne preterit in him maye be founde. Wherfore his weting & his before weting, is al one in vnderstãdinge. Than yt weting & before weting of god putteth in necessite to al thinges which he wot or before wot ne thyng after eternyte, or els after any tyme he wol or dothe of lybertie but al of necessite, whiche thyng if thou wene it be ayenst reason nat thorowe necessite to be or nat to be, al thinge that god wot or before wot, to be or nat to be, & yet nothynge defendeth any thyng to be wyll or to be before will of him our willes or our doynges to be done, or els cõmynge to be for fre arbitrement. Than thou hatte these declarations wel vnderstãde, than shalt thou fynde it resonable at proue, & that many thinges be nat thorowe necessite, but thorowe lybertie of wyl, saue necessyte of free wil, as I tofore saide: & as me thinketh al vtterly declared. Me thynketh lady qõ I so I shulde you nat displease, & euermore your reuerẽce to kepe, that these thinges cõtraryen in anye vnderstãdyng, for ye sayne somtyme is thorowe lybertie of wyl & also thorowe necessite. Of this haue I yet no sauour, without better declaration. What wonder (qõ she) is there in these thinges, sithen all day thou shalte se at thyne eye, in many thinges receyuen in hem selfe receyuers, thorow diuers reasons, as thus. I pray the qõ she which thinges ben more receyuers than comen & gone: for if I bidde the come to me, and thou come, after whan I bydde the go & thou go, thou receyuest fro thy first cõmynge. That is soth qõ I & yet qõ she in thy fyrste alone by diuers reasone was ful receyuynge to vnderstãde. As howe qõ I That shall I shewe the qõ she by ensãple of thynges that haue kynd y mouyng. Is there any thynge y meueth more kyndly than doth the heuẽs eye whiche I clepe the sonne. Sothlye qõ I me semeth it most kyndly to moue. Thou sayest soth qõ she). Than if thou loke to the sonne, in what parte he be vnder heuen, euermore he heigheth him in mouyng fro thilke place, and heigheth meuyng towarde y like same place, to thylke place from which he gothe he heigheth cõmynge, and without anye ceasynge to that place he neigheth from which he is chaunged & withdrawe. But nowe in these thinges after diuersite of reason, receyuers in one thing may be sey without repugnaunce. Wherfore in the same wyse, without any repugnaunce by my reasons to fore maked, al is one to beleue, somthing to be thorow necessite cõming for it is comynge, & yet with no necessite constrayned to be cõming, but with necessite that cometh out of free wyl, as I haue sayde. Tho lyst me a lytel to speke, & gan thyne my penne of my writyng, & said in this wyse. Tre wyse lady as me thinketh, I can allege authorytees grete that cõtrarien y our sayenges. Job sayth of mannes person, thou hast putte his terme, whiche thou might nat passe. Than saye I that no man may shorte ne length the day ordayned of his doyng, altho somtyme to os it semeth some man to do a thynge of free wyl, wherfore we his dede he heigheth. Saye to: sothe qõ she it is nothing ayenst my sayeng for god is nat begiled, ne he seeth nothig whether it shal come of lybertie or els of necessite, yet it is said to be ordayned at god immouable, whiche at man or it be done may be chaũged. Suche thyng also is that Poule the apostel sayth of hem that tofore were purposed to be saynes, as thus, which that god before wyst, & hatte predestynyd, ensamples of maniges of his sonne, that he shulde ben the fyrste begeten, that is to saye, here amonges many brethern. & whom he hath predestined, hem he hath cleped, & whom he hath cleped, hem he hath iustified, & whom he hath iustified, hem he hath magnified. This purpose after which they ben cleped saintes or holy in the euerlastinge present, wherin neither tome passed ne tyme comynge, but euer it is onely present, & nowe as mekel a moment as seuen thousande wynter, & so ayenwarde without any meuyng is nothing yche tẽporel presence, for thinge that there is euer present. Yet amõges vs men er it be in your presẽce it is mouable thorowe lybertie of arbitrement. And right as in the euerlastyng present no maner thyng was ne shalbe, but only is, & nowe here in your temporel tyme, somthyng was & is, & shalbe, but mouynge stoundes, & in this is no maner repugnaunce. Right so in the euerlastynge presence nothyng may be chaũged: & in your tẽporel tyme other while it is proued mouable by lybertie of wil or it be do, without any inconuenience therof to folowe. In your temporel tyme is no lyche presence as in y thother, for youre present is done, whan passed & to come gynnen entre, which times here amõges you euerych easily foloweth other, but the presẽce

euerlastyng dureth in onehed, withouten any ymaginable chaúgyng, & euer is presente and nowe. Trewly þ course of the planettes & ouerwhelmynges of the sonne in dayes & nightes, with a newe ginnyng of his circute after it is ended, that is to sayn, one yere to folowe another. These maken yout trásitory tymes with chaúgynge of lyues & mutacion of people. But right as your tẽporel presence conveyeth euery place, & al thinges in euery of your tymes be cõtayned, & as nowe both sey & wyll to goddes very knowynge. Than qd I me wondreth why Poule spake these wordes, by voyce of signification in tyme passed, þ god his saintes before wist, hath predestined, hath cleped, hath iustifyed, & hath magnified: me thynketh he shulde haue sayde the wordes in tyme present, & that had ben more accordaunt to the euerlastyng present, than to haue spoke in preterit voice of passed understandynge.

God Loue qd he by these wordes I se wel thou hast lytel understãding of þ euerlastyng presence, or els of my before spoken wordes, for neuer a thing of tho thou hast nẽpned was to fore other or after other, but al atones euelich at the god ben, & al togider to the euerlastyng present be nowe to understãdyng, the eternal presence, as I said, hath inclose togider one, al tymes, in which close & one al thinges that ben in diuers tymes & in diuers places temporel thou posterite or priorite ben closed therin perpetual now, and maked to dwel in perfect sight. But there thou sayest that Poule shulde haue spoke thilke forsaid sentence be time present, & that most he shulde haue accordaunt to the euerlastinge presence, why gabbest þ to thy wordes. Soothly I saye Poule moued þ wordes by signification of tyme passed, to shewe fully þ thilke wordes were nat put for tẽporel signification, for al thilk tyme were nat thilk sentẽce tẽporallych borne, whiche that Poule pronounced god haue tofore knowe, & haue cleped than magnified, wherethorow it may wel be know that Poule vsed tho wordes of passed signification, for nede & lacke of a worde in mànes bodily speche betokenynge the euerlastynge presence. And therfore worde is moste semelyche in lykeneße to euerlastyng presence, he toke his sentence for thynges, that here before ben passed, bitterly be immouable, lyke to þ euerlasting presẽce. As thilke that ben there neuer mowe not ben present, so thinges of tyme passed ne mowe in no wyse not ben passed: but al thinges in your tẽporal presẽce that passen in a lytel while, shulden ben not present. So than in that it is more symilytude to the euerlastyng presence, signification of tyme passed, than of tyme tẽporal present, & so more in accordaunce. In this maner what thinge of these that ben done thorowe tre arbitrement, or els as necessary, holy writte pronoúceth, al er eternite he speketh, in whiche presẽce is euerlasting sothe and nothyng but sothe immouable, nat after tyme, in whiche naught alway ben your wyles & your actes, & right as while they be nat, it is nat nedeful hem to be: so ofte it is nat nedeful that somtyme they shuld be. As how (quod I) for yet wull I be lerned by some ensample. Of loue (quod he) wol I nowe ensample make, sithen I know ye bee knotte in that yelke. Lo, somtyme thou wryten no arte, ne arte than mine wyl to write, & right as while þ writen nat, or els wolt nat write, it is nat nedeful the to write, or els wyle to write. And for to make þ know better, that thynges ben other wyse in the euerlasting presence, than in temporal tyme: se nowe my good childe, for somthyng is in the euerlastig presence, than in temporal tyme, it was nat in eternite tyme, in eterne presence shal it nat be. Than no reason defendeth, that somthynge ne may be in tyme temporal mouyng, that in eterne is immouable. Forsothe it is no more contrary ne lesse for to be mouable in tyme temporel, and mouable in eternite, than nat to be in any tyme, and to be alway in eternite and haue to be or els to come in tyme temporel, & nat haue be ne nought comynge to be in eternite. Yet neuer the later, I say nat somthyng to be neuer in tyme temporel, that euer is eternite, but al onely in somtyme nat to be. For I saye nat thy loue to mowe in no tyme to be, but to be alone I deny ne it to be, and yet neuer the later it is alwaye in eternite.

Also quod I it semeth to me that comynge thing or els passed here in your tẽporal tyme to be, in eternite euer now and present oweth nat to be demed, and yet folowyth nat thilke thynge, that was or els shall be, in no maner therto ben passed, or els cõmyng than bitterly shul we deny, for there without ceasyng it is in his present maner. Quod he myne owen disciple, nowe gynnest thou able to haue the name of my seruáunce. Thy wytte is directed, away is nowe errour of doubte in bicon-

tynge,

nynge, awaye is blyndnesse of loue, awaye is thoughtful study, of medlyng maners haste-ly shalte thou entre into the ioye of me, that am thyne owne maistres. Thou haste (quod she) in a fewe wordes, wel and clerely conclu-ded moche of my mater. And right as there is no reuers ne contrariousnesse in tho thynges, right so without any repugnaunce, it is said somthyng to be mouable in tyme temporel, & for it be, that in eternite dwelleth immouable nat afore it be or after that it is, but without ceasyng, for right naught is there after time, that same is there euerlastynge, that temporal-lyche somtyme nys, and to come it be it maye not be, as I haue sayde. Howe forthy (qd I) this haue I wel understande, so that nowe me thynketh that prescience of god and free acby-trement without any repugnaunce accorden and that maketh the strength of necessite, which encloseth by prescience during al tymes, and al thynges that ben, han ben, and shal ben in any tyme. I wol be nowe (qd I) a lytel under-stande (when that al thing thus before wot, whether that like necessye be of the thinges, or els that like thynges ben to ben of goddes wet-tyng, and so of god nothynge is: and if euery thyng be thorow goddes wetting and therof take his being, than shuld god be maker and auctour of badde werkes, and so he shuld not righteously punysche yuel doynges of man-kynde. (qd Loue) I shall telle the, this lesson to lerne myne owne trewe scruaunt, the noble philosophical poete, in English, whiche euer more him besyeth and trauayleth right wele for my name to encreale, wherfore al that willen me good, owe to do him worship & reuerence berbe, trewly his better ne his pere in schole of my rules coude I neuer fynde: he qd she in a treatise y he made of my seruant Troy-lus, hath this mater touched, & at y full this question assoyled. Certainly his noble say-ynges can I not amende: the goodnes of ge-til mannyche speche, without any maner of more of flatteres ymagination in wyrde and in good reason of sentence he passeth al other makers. In the boke of Troylus, the answer to thy question mayste thou lerne, neuer the later yet may lightly thyne vnderstandynge somdele be lerned, al thou haue knowyng of theise to forsaid thinges, with that thou haue vnderstandyng of two the laste chapiters of this troube boke, y is to say, good to be som-thing, and bad to wante al maner beyng, for badde is nothig els but absence of good, and that god in good, maketh y good dedes ben good, in yuel he maketh y they ben but nauzt, that they ben bad: for to nothyng is badnesse to be. I haue (qd I) tho inoughe knowynge therin, me neded of other thiges to here, that is to saye, howe I shall come to my blysse so longe desyred.

In this matter to forn declared (qd Loue) I haue wel shewed, that euery mā hath fre arbitremēt of thiges in his power to do or bido what him liketh. Out of this grounde must come the spire, that by processe of tyme shal in greatnesse spriede, to haue braunches & blosomes of warrying fruite in grace, of which the taste and the sauour is endelesse blysse in ioye euer to endure. Nowe lady (qd I) that tree to set fayne wolde I lerne. Then shalt (qd she) or thou departe hence. The first thing thou musse set thy werke on grounde fayre and good, accordaunt to thy spirages. Set not thy delyte grapes, thou goest not to the haste for to fetchen roses, thou seke not on thorne and if thou shalt haue any soueraine thynge wel the fruite of the soute booke. Therfore if thou desire this blisse, parfourne thou shalt for thy purpose there before to come. Ne to loke after y bodely goodes as I sayde if thou were warring in the freendes hede. For thou haste set thy felte in so noble a place and directly loued in thy hert, y myghtes of thy hole purpose, this seruice is ordeyned for spynge, and y more lighter thou shalt grow to be lifted. And trewly thy be vnderstan-ding the wyl, algates more ben deceyued by maner without any chaunge of the dedes, the man may it proue. (qd I) my wyll may ben numbe be for dede, and disease of many other thynges of my lyfe and of my kynne, and many other worse, that neuer comen here to mynde. And also it ofte ben out of thought, for no remembraunce may holde: but thou art truely in here, be it neuer so lytle deserued. Howe (qd she) thou my wel shal forsee, thy fredom to be stedded euermore ywarde: It is thy trewe, that thou loued and hast lo-ued, and yet that louen thus dangerous perle, and in thy wyl thou thinkest to holde it. Than is thy wil knyt in loue, not to chaunge for no newe lust beforne: this wil teacheth thee here from al maner varyng. But than although

Quan.xi. thou

thou be thretened in deth or els in otherwise, yet is it in thyn abitrement to chose, thy loue to voyde or els to holde: And thilke arbytrement is in a maner a iudgement betwene desyre and thy herte. And if thou deme to loue thy good wyl fayleth, than arte thou worthy no blysse that good wyl shulde deserue: and if thou chose contynuaunce in thy good seruice, than thy good wyll abydeth, nedes blysse folowing of thy good wil must come by strēgth of thilke iudgemēt: for thy first wil ỳ taught thyn herte to abyde, & halte it frō the chaunge with thy reson is accorded. Trewly this maner of wil thus shal abyde, impossible it were to turne if thy hert be trewe, and if euery mā diligently the menynges of his wil consider, he shal wel vnderstande that good wyl knyt with reason, but in a false hert neuer is voyded: for power & might of kepinge this good wyl is therow lyberte of arbitremēt in hert, but good wil to kepe may not fayle. Eke than if it fayle, it sheweth it selfe that goodwyl in kepyng is not there. And thus false wyll that putteth out the good, anone constrayneth the herte to accorde in louynge of thy goodwyl, and this acordaūce betwene falce wyl & thin herte, in falsyte ben lykened togyther. Yet a lytel wol I say the, in good wil thy goodwilles to rayse & strength. Take hede to me, qd she, howe thy willes thou shalt vnderstande. Right as ye han in your body dyuers membres, & fyue soudrie wyttes, euerych aparte to his owne doyng, which thynges as instrumētes ye vsen, as your handes aparte to handle, fete to go, tonge to spekc, eye to se: Right so ỳ soule hath in him certayne sterynges and strēgthes whiche he vseth as instrumētes to his certayne doynges. Reason is in the soule, which he vseth thinges to know & to proue, & wyl which he vseth to wyne: & yet is neyther wyl ne reason al ỳ soule, but euerych of hem is a thing by him self in ỳ soule. And right as euerich hath thus singuler instrumētes by hē selfe, they han as wel dyuers apes & dyuers maner vsinges, & thilke apes mowen in wyl ben cleped affectiōs. Affection is an instrumēt of willynge in his apetytes. Wherfore mokel folke sayn, if a resonable creatures soule any thinge feruētly wyneth, affectuously he wilneth, & thus may wyl by terme of equinocas in thre wayes ben vnderstāde: One is instrumēt of willing, another is affection of this instrumēt: & ỳ thirde is vse, ỳ setteth it a werke. Instrumēt of willyng is thilke strēgth of the soule, which ỳ cō strayneth to wyne, right as reason is instrument of resons, which ye vsen whan ye loken. Affection of this instrument is a thyng, by whiche ye be drawe desyrously any thynge to wyne in couetyous maner, all be it for the tyme out of youre mynde: as if it come in your thought thilke thing to remembre, anon ye ben willyng thilke to done or els to haue. And thus is instrument wil, & affection is wyl also, to wyne thynge as I said: as for to wyne helth, whan wil nothig theron thinketh, for anon as it cometh to memorie it is in wyl, and so is affection to wyne slepe whan it is out of mynde, but anon as it is remembred wyl wyneth slepe, whan his tyme cometh of ỳ doynge. For affection of wyl neuer accordeth to sickneſſe, ne alway to wake. Right so in a true louers affection of willyng instrument, is to wyne truthe in his seruyce, and this affectiō alway abideth, although he be slepyng or thretned, or els not therō thinkyng, but anon as it cometh to mynde, anon he is stedfast in that wil to abyde. Use of this instrument forsothe is another thing by him selfe, & that haue ye not but whan ye be doyng in wylled thing by affecte or instrumēt of wil purposed or desired, & this maner of vsage in my seruice wisely nedeth to be ruled frō waiters wh enuye closed, from spekers ful of tāgling words, from proude folke & hautayn, ỳ lambes & innocētes bothe scornen & dispysen. Thus in doyng varieth the actes of willynge euerich frō other, & yet ben they cleped wil, & ỳ name of wyl vtterly owen they to haue, as instrumēt of wyl is wyl, whan ye turne into purpose of any thing to don, be it to sye or to stāde, or any such thig els. This instrumēt may ben had, although affect & vsage be left out of doing, right as ye haue sight & reson, & yet alway vse ye gretteſt wisdōe in hem shal he be, & they in god. Nowe than whan al false folke be ashamed, which wenē al bestyalte & erthly thig be swetter & better to ỳ body, thā heuēly is to ỳ soule: this is the grace & the frute ỳ I long haue desired, it dothe me good ỳ sauour to smel. Christ now to ỳ I crye of mercy & of grace, & graūt of thy goodnes to euery maner reder ful vnderstādyng in this leude pamflet to haue, & let no man wene other cause in this werke, than is verily ỳ soth: For enuy is enuredy al innocētes to shende, wherfore I wold that good speche enuy euermore hynder. But

no

no mā wene this werke be sufficiētly maked, for goddes werke passeth mās, no mans witte to parfit werke may by no way purchay thēd: How shuld I than so lewde, aughte wene of perfection any ende to gete. Neuer the later grace, glory, & laude I yelde & put w worshipful reuerēces to ỳ forsaid godhede, w whome closed which ỳ ỳ heuy labour of my sickenesse hath turned into mirth of helth to recouer: for ryst as I was sorowed thorow ỳ glotō cloud of manyfolde sickly sorow, so mirth ayen coming helth hath me gladed & gretly cōforted. I beseche & pray therfore, & I crye on goddes gret pyte & on his moste mercy, ỳ this present scorges of my flesh now make medcin & lechcraft of my inner mans helth, so ỳ my passed trespas & crimes, through weping of myne eyen ben wasshe, & I boyded frō al maner disese, & no more to wepe herafter, I now be kept thorow goddes grace: so ỳ goddes hāde which ỳ mercyably me hath scorged, herafter in good plite frō thēce mercyably me kepe & defēde. In this boke be many priuy thinges wipled and folde, vnneth shul lewde mē ỳ plites vnwinde, wherfore I pray to ỳ holy goste the lene of his owenmētes mēs-wittes to clere, & for goddes loue no mā wōder why or how this question come to my mynde, for my great lustly desyre was of this lady to ben enformed, my lewde wille to amēde. Certes I know not other mēnes wyttes what I shuld aske, or in answere what I shulde saye, I am so lewde my selfe, that mot el more lernynge yet me behoueth. I haue made therfore as I coude, but not sufficiently as I wolde, and as mater yaue me sentence, for my dul wytte is hyndred by step mother of forgetyng, and with cloude of vnconnyng, that stoppeth the lyght of my Margarite perle, wherfore it may not shyne on me as it shulde. I desyre not onely a good reder, but also I coueyte and pray a good booke a mender, in correction of wordes and of sentence: and onely this mede I coueyte for my trauayle, that euery vncer and herer of this lewde tauelye, deuoute heritous and prayers to god the great iudge yelden, and prayen for me, in that wyse that in his bone my synnes mowe ben released & forgeuen: he that prayeth for other, for him selfe trauayleth. Also I praye that euery man pardy mowe knowe thorow what intencion of herte this treatyse haue I drawe, lowe was te ỳ rightful Margarite in reference to chyldren of Israel was spyrituel meate: bodily also it was, for mēnes bodies it nourisheth. And yet neuer ỳ later Christ it signifyed. Lyghte so a iewel betokeneth a gemme, and that is a stone vertuous, or els a perle. Margarite a womā betokeneth grace, lerning, or wisdom of god, or els holy church. If bred thorow vertue is mate holy flesche, what is that our god sauter? It is the spirite that yeueth lyfe, the flesche of nothynge it profyteth. Flesche is fleshelye vnderstandynge: flesh without grace & loue naught is worth. The letter sleeth, the spirite yeueth lyfe, ỳ is vnderstādyng. Charyte is loue, and loue is charyte, god graunte vs all therin to be feended. And thus the Testament of Loue is ended.

¶ Thus endeth the Testament of Loue.
And here after followeth.

The lamentacion
of Mary Magdaleyne.

Longed in the wake of
mortal distress
Alas for me, to whome
shal I complayn
Or who shall bewayle
this great heuynesse
to me wofull
ful wandasome.
My lord is gon, alas who can it amende
This sodaine chaūce perfect impacyence
That nothing can I do, but wepe and wayle

My lorde is gone, ỳ here in grauē was layde
After his great passyon and dethe cruell
Who hath him thus agayne betrayde
Or what man here abourē amēt
Where he is become, the prince of Israel
Jesus of Nazareth, my godly louer
My parfyte loue, and hope of al honour

What creature hath him hence conueyed
Or howe might this so sodaine bestyde
I wolde I had here with him stayed
And so shulde I haue had my purpose al
I bought ovntmentes ful precious & royal
Wherewith I hoped his corps to anoynted
But he thus gone, my mynde is disapointed

Wyle I therfore aduertyse and beholde

This pytous chaunce, here in my presence
Ful lytel maruayle though my herte be colde
Consydring lo, my lordes absence
Alas that I so ful of negligence
Shulde be foundē because I come so late
Al men may say I am infortunate

Cause of my sorow you may vnderstande
(Quia tulerunt dominum meum)
Another is, that I ne may fonde
I wot nere, vbi posuerunt eum
Thus I muste bewayle: Dolorem meum
With herty wepyng, I can no better deserue
Tyl deth approch, my hert for to kerue

My hert oppressē with sodayne auenture
By feruent anguysshe is be wrapped so
That longe this lyfe I may nat endure
Suche is my payne, suche is my mortall wo
Neuertheles, to what partie shall I go
In hope to fynde myne owne turtyl true
My lyues ioy, my soueraygne lorde Jesu

Sythe all my ioye, that I call his presence
Is thus remoued, nowe I am ful of mone
Alas the whyle, I made no prouydence
For this mishap, wherfore I sighe and grone
Socour to fynde, to what place might I gon
Fayne I wolde to some man my hert breke
I not to whom I may complayne or speke

Alone here I stande, full sory and ful sadde
Which hoped to haue sene my lorde a kyng
Small cause haue I to be merry or gladde
Remembryng thys bytterfull departyng
In this worlde is no creature lyuyng
That was to me so good and gracious
His loue also than golde more precious

Ful sore I sighe, without comforte agayne
There is no cure to my fatuation
His brennyng loue, my hert so both constrayne
Alas here is a woful permutation
Wherof I fynde no ioye nor consolation
Therfore my payne all erthly to counterfe
With deth I feare wol ende my bitwyne ye

This wo and anguysshe is intollerable
Yf I byde here, lyfe can I nat sustayne
Yf I go hence my paynes be vncurable
Where hit to fynde, I know no place certayne
And thus I not of these thynges twayne
Which I may take, & which I may refuse
My hert is wouñded heron to thynke or muse

A whyle I shall stande in thys mournyng
In hope if any vysyon wol appere
That of my loue might tel some good tyding
Which in to ioy, myst chaūge my wepig chere
I trust in his grace & his mercy dere
But at the leest, though I therwith me kyl
I shall nat spare to wayle & wepe my fyl

And if that I dye in suche auenture
I can no more, but welcome as my chaunce
My bones shall rest here in this sepulture
My lyfe, my deth, is at his ordynaunce
It shal be tolde in euerlastyng remēbraunce
Thus to departe, is to me no shame
And also therof I am nothing to blame

Hope agaynst me hath bet coueyse stake
There is no more, but thus shal I dye
I se right wel my lorde hath me forsake
But in my conscyence, cause knowe I none why
Though he be farre hence, and nothyng nye
Yet my woful hert after him doth syke
And causeth teares to ren down by my cheke

Morenyng alas, I haue loste his presence
Whō in this worlde was al my fulle haunce
I crye and cal with herty diligence
But there is no wyght gyueth attendaunce
Her to certifie of myne enquisaunce
Wherfore I wyl to al this worlde be wrate
How that my lorde is slayne & borne awaye

Though I mourne it is no great wonder
Sythe he is al my ioye in special
And nowe I thynke for to be so farre a sonder
That him to se I feare neuer I shal
It helpeth no more after him to cal
Ne after him to enquire in any coste
Alas how is he thus gone and loste

The ieres I thynke ful of misery
Sette to malyce, by their bely cure
With force and might of grieful trechery
Hath enterrmued my lordes sepulture
And borne away that precious fygure
I cursy of it nothyng, if they have done so
Shamed I am, alas what shal I do

With their vengeaunce infaciable
How have they him entreated so
That to reporte it is to lamentable

The

They bete hys body from toppe to the toe
Neuer man was borne that felte suche wo
They wounded him alas with al greuaunce
The blode down reyled in moste habundaunce

The bloody rowes stremed downe ouer al
They hym assayled so malycyously
With their scourges and strokes beestyal
They spared not, but smote incessauntly
To satisfye their malyce they were ful besy
They spit in his face, they smote here & there
He groned ful sore, and sweate many a tere

They crowned him w thornes sharpe & kene
The vaynes rent, the blode ran down a pace
With blode ouercome were both hys eyen
And bolne with strokes was his bleded face
They him entreated, as men without grace
They knoled to hym, & made many a scorne
Lyke hethounders they haue hym all to torne

Upon a mighty crosse in length and brede
These tormentours them dyd their cursednesse
They nayled hym without pyte or drede
His precious blode braste out in largenesse
They stayned him alonge, as men mercylesse
The bery vaynes all to myne apparence
Myned a sonder for their great violence

All this I beholding with mine eyen twayne
Stode there besyde, with ruful attendaunce
And euer me thought, he bered in that payne
Lyked on me, with berdly countenaunce
As he had sayd to his special remembraunce
Farwel Magdalen, departe must I nedes this
My bertes, Canquid est a te quid te terrens

With ruful syghe when I gan beholde
Eye of my love I almoste dasht naught
Care my bere, my handes wrange I folde
And of pytyght my bert braste such a draught
That many a fal swounning there I caught
I bulsed my body, falling on the grounde
Wherof I tele many a greuous wounde

Than these wretches ful of al frowardnesse
Gane hym to drinke eyle tempred with gal
Alas, that pore ful of bytternesse
My lordes there called thanne to appal
And yet therof myght he not dryncke at al
But spake there worded, as he thought best
Father of heuen, Consummatum est

Than kneled I downe, in paynes outrage
Clippyng ye crosse within myn armes twayn
His bloode distilled downe on my vysage
My clothes eke the droppes dyd distayne
To haue dyed for hym I wolde ful fayne
But what shulde it auayle if I dyd so
Sithe he is, Suspensus in patibulo

Thus my lorde ful dere was al disgrysed
With blode, payne and woundes many one
Hys bernes braste, his ioyntes all to rysed
Parting a sonder the flesshe fro the bone
But I saw he bringe for there alone
For Cum inquis deputatus es
That lyke a man, but lyke a leprous wreth

A blynde knyght men called Longius
With a spere approched unto me louesome
Launsyng his syde ful perilously alas
That his precious bert he clene vp rasme
The purple blode ete fro the bertes barme
Downe rayled right fast, in myght rufel route
With ghostal water brought out of paradyse

When I beheld this ruful payne
I wote nat how, by fortune auenture
My bert was persed with bere rufel glayue
That in me remayned no lyte of stature
Strokes of deth I felte without faylle
My bertes wounde I caught in bere
And brought to gyder as my bert bled

The woulde bert and blode of my sauyour
Shalt euer by de treasy remayne
The spere yerued all ouer
Wherin I fonde be graue pleasure
The spere also that made be bare of lyfe
Perced my bert as ye haue herde
That body and soule were at a sonder

As soone as I might I retired be agayne
Ther vnder I could not bere beholding
From my syde there issued many a great payne
Lyke bodyly sorowe I neuer bere before
I wepte, I bledde, I swouned ofte I fared
As one that for his lyfe morning had cared

Lokyng vp to that ruful syght
Sawe I the vysage pale of that treasure
But to precious a tyght poured with bloode
Sawe euer I none lyuing creature
So it exceded the boundes of measure

Finis. That

That mānes mynde, with al his wittes fiue
Is nothing able, that payne for to discriue

Than gan I theire myn armes to embrace
Up lyfting my handes ful mournyngly
I sighed and sore sobbed in that place
Both heuen & erth might haue herde me crye
Weping, and sayd alas incessauntly
Ah my swete herte, my gostly paramour
Alas I may nat thy body socour

O blessed lorde, howe fierce and howe cruel
These cursed wightes nowe hath the slayne
Returne alas thy body cursydly
Wounde within wounde, ful bitter is thy payn
Nowe wolde that I might to the attayne
To nayle my body fast vnto thy tree
So that of this payne thou might go free

I can nat reporte ne make no rehersayle
Of my demeryng, with the circumstaunce
But wel I wot the sprate with euery nayle
Thirled my soule by inwarde resemblaunce
Whiche neuer shal out of my remembraunce
During my lyfe it wol cause me to wayle
As ofte as I remembre that batayle

Ah ye lewes, worse than dogges rabyate
What moued you thus cruelly hym to slay
He neuer displeased you nor caused debate
Your loue and true bettes he coueyted aye
He preched, he tẽched, he shewed ye right way
Wherfore ye theire yiftes nowe hath hym harde
Now haue hym thus slayne for his trwarde

Ye ought to haue remẽbred one thing special
His fauour, his grace, and his magnificence
He was your prince borne, and lorde ouer al
Nowe be it ye toke him in final reuerence
He was ful meke in suffryng your offryce
Neuertheles ye tewoured him with one assēt
As hungry wolues doth the lambe innocent

Where was your pyte, o people merciles
Arming your selfe with falsheed & treason
On my lorde ye haue shewed your wodnesse
Lyke no men, but beestes without reason
Your malyce he suffred al for the season
Your payne wol come, thynke it nat to slacke
Man without mercy of mercy shal lacke

O ye traytours & maintayners of madnesse
Unto your foly I ascribe al my payne
Ye haue me depriued of ioye and gladnesse
So dealyng with my lorde and souerayne
Nothing shulde I nede thus to complayne
If he had lyued in peace and tranquillyte
Whom ye haue slayne through your iniquite

Farewel your noblenesse þ̄ sōtime dyd rayne
Farewel your worthyp, glory and fame
Here after to lyue in hate and disdayne
Warnayle ye not, for your trespace & blame
Unto shame is tourned al your good name
Upon you nowe wol wonder euery nacion
As people of moste vyle reputacion

These wicked wretches, these hounden of hel
As I haue tolde playne here in this sentence
Were not content my dere soule thus to quel
But yet they must embeselyle hys prelence
As I perceyue by couert violence
They haue him conueyed to my displesure
For here is lafte but naked sepulture

Wherfore of trouth and rightful iugement
That their malyce agayne may be acquited
After my herdyte, and auysement
Of falle murdre they shal be endyted
Of theire also, whiche shal not be respited
And in al haste they shal be hanged & drawe
I wol my selfe plede this cause in the lawe

Alas yf I with terme attendaunce
Had fyl abydden with my lordes corse
And kept it styl with true perseueraunce
Than had nat befal this woful dyuorce
But as for my payne welcome and no force
This shal be my songe where so euer I go
Departyng fro grounde of al my wo

I forthynke wel nowe in my pames smerte
Ther is no wounde of so grenous dolour
As is the wounde of my careful herte
Syth I haue lofte thus my paramour
Al swetnesse is tourned vn to sour
Wherfore to my herte nothyng may comfort
But he that bearyth vpon the crosse hys port

The ioye excellent of blyssed paradyse
Wayte me alas whyo wyl comforte
Songe of angel nothyng may me suffyse
As in myne herte nowe to make disporte
Al I refuse but that I might resorte
Unto my loue, the wel of goodlyhed
For whose longing I trowe I shal be ded

Of

Of paynfull labour and turment corporal
I make therof none exception
Paynes of hel I wol passe ouer al
My loue to fynde in myne affection
So great to hym is my delectacion
A thousande tymes martred wolde I be
His blessed body ones if I might se

About this worlde so large in al compace
I shal not spare to renne my life durynge
My fete also shal not rest in one place
Tyl of my loue I may here some tydinge
For whose absence my hãdes now I wringe
O thou blynde on him, cease shal neuer my mynde
O gentyl Jesu where shal I the fynde

Jerusalem I wol serche place fro place
Syon, the dale of Josophath also
And if I fynde hym not in al this space
By mount Oliuet to Bethany wol I go
These wayes wol I wander and many mo
Nazareth, Bethleem, Mountana, Jude
Morrauayle shal me payne him for to se

His blessed face if I might se and fynde
Serche I wolde euery coste and countrey
The farthest parte of Egipt or hore Jnde
Shulde be to me but a lytel iourney
Howe is he thus gone or taken away
If I knewe the ful trouth and certeyne
Yet from this care released mighe I be

Into wilderneſſe I thinke best to go
Sithe I can no more tidinges of him here
There may I my life lede to and fro
There may I dwel, and to no man apere
To towne ne village wol I come nere
Alone in woodes, in roches, & in caues depe
I may at myne own wyl both wayle & wepe

Myne eyen twayne without daryaunce
Shal neuer cease, I promyse faythfully
There to wepe with great habundaunce
Bytter teares renuyng incessauntly
The which teares medled ful pitously
With the very blode euer shal renne also
Expressyng in myne hert the greuous wo

Worldely fode and sustenaunce I desire none
Suche lyuyng as I fynde, such wol I take
Rootes that growen on the craggy stone
Shal me suffyce with water of the lake
Than thus may I say for my lordes sake
(Fuerunt mihi lachryme mee)
(In deserto panes die ac nocte)

My body to clothe it maketh no force
A mourning mantel shalbe sufficient
The greuous woundes of his pytous corse
Shal be to me a ful royal garnement
He departed thus I am best content
His crosse with nayles and scourges withal
Shal be my thought and payne special

Thus wol I lyue, as I haue here tolde
Yf I may any longe tyme endure
But I fere dethe is ouer me so bolde
That of my purpose I can not be sure
My paynes encrease with out measure
For of longe lyfe who can lay any reason
Al thyng is mortal and hath but a season

I sygh ful sore, and it is fette yfet
Myne hert I fele nowe bleden inwardly
The blody teares I may in no wyse let
Sithe of my payne I fynde no remedye
I thanke god of al yt I nowe dye
Hys wyl performed I holde me content
My soule let hym that hath it me lent

For longer to endure it is intollerable
My woful hert is inflamed so huge
That no sorowe to myne is comparable
Sithe of my mynde I fynde no refuge
Yet I hym requere as rightful iuge
To remoyde fro me the inwarde sorowe
Lest I lyue not to the nexte morowe

Within myne hert is imprinted ful sore
His royal forme, his shappe, his femelyhede
His porte, his chere, his goodnesse euermore
His noble persone with al gentylnesse
He is the welle of al pytyfulnesse
The very redemer of al mankynde
Whom loue I best with herte, soule and mynde

In his absence my paynes ful bytter be
Right wel I may it fele nowe inwardely
No wonder is though they hurte or dere me
They cause me to crye so rufully
Myne herte oppressed is so wonderfully
Onely for hym, which so is bright of blee
Alas I trowe I shal hym neuer se

My love is translate ful farre in exile
My mynde is chaunged in to paynes colde

My

My lyfe I thinke endureth but a while
Anguisshe and payne is that I beholde
Wherfore my handes thus I wringe a folde
In to this graue I loke, I cal, I pray
Deth remayneth, and lyfe is borne away

Now must I walke and wander here & there
God wot to what partes I shal me dresse
With quakyng hert, wepyng many a tere
To seke out my loue and al my swetenesse
I wolde be wyst what mortal heuynesse
Abont myn hert reneweth more and more
Than wolde he nat kepe pyte longe in store

Without him I may not longe endure
Hys loue so sore worketh within my brest
And euer I wepe before this sepulture
Sighing ful sore, as myne hert shulde brest
During my lyfe I shal optayne no rest
But mourne and wepe, where that euer I go
Makyng complaynt of al my mortal wo

Al I crye, but there is no audyence
My comyng hider was him for to please
My soule oppresst is here with his absence
Alas he lyst not to set myne herte in ease
Wherfore to payne my selfe withal disease
I shal not spare tyl he take me to grace
Or els I shal serue here in hys place

Ones if I might with him speke
It were al my ioy, with parfyt plesaunce
So that I might to hym myne herte breke
I shulde anone deuoyde al my greuaunce
For he is the blysse of very recreaunce
But nowe alas, I can nothyng do so
For in stede of ioy naught haue I but wo

His noble corse within myn hertes rote
Depe is graued, whiche shal neuer slake
Nowe is he gone wo what place I ne wote
I mourne, I wepe, and al is for his sake
Sith he is passe, here a bowe I make
With hertely promyse, a therto I me bynde
Neuer to cease tyl I may hym fynde

Vnto his mother I thynke for to go
Of her haply some comforte may I take
But one thinge yet me fereth and no mo
Yf I any mencyon of him make
Of my wordes she wolde trimble and quake
And who coude her blame, she hauing but one
The sone borne away, the mother wol mone

Sorowes many hath she suffred trewly
Sith that she first conceyued him and bare
And seuyn thynges there be most specially
That drowneth her hert in sorowe and care
Yet lo, in no wyse may they compare
With this one nowe, the whiche if she knewe
She wolde her paynes euerichone renewe

Great was her sorowe by mennes sayeng
Whan in the temple Simeon Iustus
Shewing to her, these wordes prophesieng
(Tuam animam pertransibit gladius)
Also whan Herode that tyraunt furious
Her childe pursued in euery place
For his lyfe went neither mercy ne grace

She mourned whan she knewe hym gone
Ful longe she sought or she him founde ayene
Whan he went to deth hys crosse him vpon
It was to her syght a rewful payne
Whã he hong there, betwene theues twayne
And the speare vnto his herte thrust right
She swouned, and to the ground there pight

Whan deed and blody in her lappe lay
His blysled body, bothe handes & fete al tore
She cryed out and sayd, nowe welaway
Thus arayde was neuer man before
Whan hast was made hys body to be bore
Vnto his sepulture here to remayne
Vnnethes for wo she coude her sustayne

These sorowes seuin, like swerdes euery one
His mothers herte wounded fro syde to syde
But if she knewe her sonne thus gone
Out of this worlde she shuld with deth tryde
For eare she coude no lenger here abyde
Hauyng no more is yor consolacyoun
Than I here standing in this station

Wherfore her to se I dare nat presume
Fro her presence I wol my selfe refrayne
Yet had I leuer to dye and consume
Whã his mother shuld haue any more payne
Neuertheles her sonne I wolde se ful fayne
His presence was very ioye and swetnesse
His absence is but sorowe and heuynesse

There is no more, sith I may him nat mete
Whom I desyre aboue al other thyng
Nede I must take the sour with the swete
For of his noble corse I here nory dyn
Ful ofte I crye, and my handes wring

Myne herte alas, relenteth al in payne
Whiche wol brast bothe sencwe and bayne

Alas howe vnhappy was this woful hour
Wherin is thus myspended my seruyce
For myn entent and eke myrewe labour
To none effecte may come in any wyse
Alas I thynke yf he do me dispyse
And lyst not to take my simple obseruance
There is no moze, but dethe is my fynaunce

I haue him called, Sed non respondet mihi
Wherfoze my mirth is tourned to mournyng
O dere lozde, Quid mali feci tibi
That me to cõfoze I fynde no erthly thyng
Alas, haue compassyon of my cryeng
Yf fro me, Faciem tuam abscondis
There is no moze, but Consumere me vis

Within myne hert is grounded thy fygure
That al this wozldes horrible tourment.
May it not aswage, it is so without measure
It is so brenning, it is so feruent
Remember lozde I haue ben diligent
Euer the to please onely and no mo
Myne herte is with the where so euer I go

Therfoze my dere darlyng, Trahe me post te
And lette me not stande thus desolate
(Quia non est, qui consoletur me)
Myne hert for the is disconsolate
My paynes also nothyng me moderate
Nowe if it lyst the to speke with me a lyue
Come in hast, for my herte a sonder wyl ryue

To the I profer lo my poore seruyce
The for to please after myne owne entent
I offre here, as in deuout sacrifyce
My bore replete with precious oyntment
Myne eyen twayne, wepyng sufficient
Myne herte with anguyshe fulfylled is alas
My soule eke redy for loue aboute to pas

Naught els haue I the to please or pay
For yf myn hert were golde or precious stone
It shulde be thyne without any delay
With hertely chere thou shulde haue it anone
Why suffrest thou me than to stande alone
Thou hast I trowe my wepyng in disdayne
Or els thou knowest nat what is my payne

Yf thou withdrawe thy noble daliaunce
For ought that euer I displeased the
Thou knowest right wel it is but ignoraunce
And of no knowlege for certaynte
Yf I haue offended lozde forgyue it me
Gladde I am for to make ful repentaunce
Of al thyng that hath ben to thy greuaunce

Myne herte alas, swelleth within my brest
So sore oppresst with anguyshe & with payne
That al to peces forsothe it wol brest
But if I se thy blyssed coste againe
For lyfe ne deth I can nat me refrayne
Yf thou make delay thou mayst be sure
Myne hert wol lepe in to thys sepulture

Alas my lozd, why farest thou thus with me
My tribulacion yet haue in mynde
Where is thy mercy, where is thy pite
Whiche euer I trusted in the to fynde
Sõtime thou were to me both good & kynde
Lette it please the my prayer to accept
Whiche with teares I haue here bewept

On me thou oughtest to haue ben routh
Sith for the is al this mournyng
For sith I to the yplighted fayth my trouth
I neuer varyed with discordyng
That knowest thou best my owne derlyng
Why constraynest thou me thus to morne
My wo forsothe can the nothyng auayle

I haue endured without variaunce
Right as thou knowest, thy loue with stedfast
With hert & thought aye, at thy ordinaunce
Lyke to the sapfire alwaye in one case
I neuer chaunged the for no newe
Why withdrawest thou my presence
Sith al my thought is for thyne absence

With hert intier, swete Lozde I crye to the
Encline thyne eares to my complaynt
And come, Velocius euandi me
Remembre myne hertes disposicioun
It may not endure with this condicioun
Therfoze out of these paynes, Libera me
And where thou arte, Pone me iuxta te

Let me beholde, O Jesu thy blyssed face
Thy faire glozious angelike vysage
Bowe thyne eares to my complaynt, alas
For to conuey me out of thys rage
Alas my lozde, take fro me this dõmage
And to my desire for mercy condiscende
For non but thou, may my greuaũce amende

Nowe

Nowe yet good lorde, I the beseech and pray
As thou rayssed my brother Lazarous
From dethe to lyfe the fourth day
Came ayen in body and soule pretious
As great a thyng mayst thou shewe vnto vs
Of thy selfe, by power of thy godhed
As thou dyd of him, lyenge in graue ded

Myne hert is wounded with thy charite
It brenneth, it flameth incessantly
Come my dere lorde, Ad adiuuandum me
Nowe be not longe my payne to multiplye
Lest in the meane tyme I departe and dye
In thy grace I put bothe hope and confidence
To do as it pleaseth thy hye magnificence

Floodes of dethe, and tribulacyons
In to my soule I fele entred ful depe
Alas that here is no consolacyoun
Euer I wayle, euer I mourne and wepe
And sorowe hath wounded myn hert ful depe
O dere loue no marueyle though I dye
(Sagitte tue infixe sunt mihi)

Wandringe in this place, as in wylderneſſe
No comforte haue I, ne yet assuraunce
Desolate of ioye, replete with fayntneſſe
No answere receyuyng of myne enquiraunce
Myne hert also greued with displesaunce
Wherfore I may saye, O deus deus
(Non est dolor sicut dolor meus)

Myne hert expresseth, Quod dilerī multum
I may not endure though I wolde fayne
For nowe, Solum superest sepulchrum
I knowe it right wel by my huge payne
Thus for loue I may not lyfe sustayne
But o god, I muse what ayleth the
(Quod sic repente precipitas me)

Alas, I se it wyl none otherwyse be
Nowe must I take my leaue for euermore
This bitter payne hath almost discomfite me
My loues corse I can in no wyse restore
Alas to this wo that euer I was bore
Here at this tombe nowe must I dye a statue
Dethis aboute my hert for to tarue

My testament I wol begyn to make
To god the father, my soule I cōmende
To Jesu my loue, that dyed for my sake
My herte and al, bothe I gyue & sende
In whose loue my lyfe maketh ende

My body also to this monument
I here bequeth, bothe boxe and oyntment

Of al my wylles, lo nowe I make the last
Right in this place within this sepulture
I wol be buryed whan I am dede and past
And vpō my graue I wol haue this scripture
Here within resteth a goostly creature,
Christes trew louer, Mary Magdalayne
Whose hert for loue, brake in peces twayne

Ye vertuous women, tender of nature
Ful of pyte and of compassyoun
Resorte I pray you vnto my sepulture
To singe my dirige with great deuocioun
Shewe your charite in this condicioun
Sing with pyte and let your hertes wepe
Remembryng I am dede and layed to slepe

Than whan ye begyn to parte me fro
And ended haue your mourninge obseruaūce
Remembre where so euer that ye go
Alway to serche and make due enquerraunce
After my loue, myne hertes sustenaunce
In euery towne and in euery vyllage
Yf ye may here of this noble ymage

And if it happe by any grace at laste
That ye my true wloue fynde in any coste
Say that his Magdalayne is dede and paste
For his pure loue hath yelded vp the goost
Say that of al thing I loued hym most
And that I myght not this dethe eschewe
My paynes so sore dyd euer renewe

And in token of loue perpetual
Whan I am buryed in this place present
Take out myne hert, the very rote and al
And close it within this box of oyntment
To my dere loue make therof a present
Kneelyng downe with wordes lamentable
Do your message, speke fayre and tretable

Say that to hym my selfe I cōmende
A thousande tymes with hert so fre
This pore token say to hym I sende
Pleaseth his goodnesse to take it in gree
It is his owne of right, it is hys fee
Whiche he asked, whan he sayd longe before
Gyue me thy hert, and I desyre no more

A due my lorde, my loue so fayre of face
A due my turtle doue so frethe of hue

A due

I due my mirthe, a due al my solace
I due alas, my sauiour lorde Jesu
I due the gentellest that euer I knewe
I due my most excellent paramour
Fayrer than rose, swetter than lylly flour

I due my hope of al pleasure eternal
My lyfe, my welth, and my prosperite
Myne hert of golde, my peerle oriental
Myne adamant of parfyte charite
My chefe refuge and my felycite
My comforte, and al my recreatioun
Far wel my parpetual saluatioun

Farewel myne emperour celestyal
Most beautyful prince of all mankynde
I due my lorde, of herte moste lyberal
Farwel my swetest, bothe soule and mynde
So louyng a spouse shal I neuer fynde
I due my souerayne, and very gentylman
Farewel dere herte, as herely as I can

Thy wordes eloquent flowyng in swetnesse
Shal no more alas, my myndc reconforte
Wherfore my lyfe must ende in bytternesse
For in this worlde shal I neuer resorte
To the, whiche was myne heuenly disporte
Ye alas it wol none other be
Nowe farwel the grounde of al dignite

I due the fayrest that euer was bore
Alas I may nat se your blessed face
Nowe welaway that I shal se nomore
Thy blessed vilage, so replete with grace
Wherin is printed my parfyte solace
I due myne hertes roote and al for euer
Nowe farewel, I must from the discouer

My soule for angwyshe is nowe ful thirsty
I faynt right sore for heuynesse
My lorde, my spouse: Cur me derelequisti
Sith I for the suffre al this distresse
What causeth thee to seme thus mercyleſſe
Sith it the pleseth of me to make an ende
In manus tuas my spirite I commende.

Finis.

The Remedy of loue,

Syng the manyfolde inconuenyence
Fallynge by vnbrydled prosperite
Which is not refrayd wt moral prudence
Nothing more welthe than youthes frite
Moued I am, bothe of right and equite
To youthes welle, somwhat to write
Wherby he may him selfe safe conduyte

First I note, as thyng moste noyous
Vnto youthe a greuous malady
Amonge vs called loue encombrous
Vexyng yonge people straungely
Ofte by force causeth hem to dye
Age is eke tormented by loue
Vyneth the grydle, and not aboue

Wherfore this werke, which is right labo
For age me nede nat in honde to take
To youthe me owyth to be obsequious
Howe I begyn runs to worke for his sake
Whiche may the feruence of loue slake
To the louer, as a mirrour true
To him that is none a preseruatyue

That mighty lorde whiche me gouerneth
Youthe I meane, measure if I pace
In euery mater whiche him concerneth
First as is behouefut, I wol aske grace
And forthwythal in this same place
Or I begyn, I wol knele and saye
These fewe wordes, and him of helpe praye

Flouryng youth, whiche hast auauntage
In strength of body in lustc and beaute
Also a precellyng haste aboue age
In many a synguler commodite
Howe be it one thyng he hath beyonde the
To thy most profyte and greatest auayle
Which thuld the coduit, I mean sad counsaile

And yet good lorde, of a presumption
I nyl deprayne thy myghe and deuce

I lyne but vnder thy protection
I am thy subiecte, I weare thy lyuerie
For thou arte grounde of my prosperite
And freschest floure of al my garlonde
Thy singuler ayde, as I wel vnderstonde

But as he that oweth his lorde best seruyce
And myste farthe, his honour to supporte
Right so I speke, and in none other wyse
I knowelege my selfe one of the leste sorte
Of thy seruauntes, to our elders comforte
Drawe sadde counsayle to the if thou lyste
The and thy power, who may than resyste

Yf on age, vnder wordes fewe
And his erroneous opinion
What spekest of him, which saith most vntrue
Al trouble to be of vi disposicion
Dampneth vs al without exception
And for a tolerable auauntage
The sayste in him reserueth counsayle sage

Wel may sadde counsayle in him rest
But yet his dedes ben ferre therfro
He may say with our parysshe preest
Do as I sayne and not as I do
For I my selfe knowe one certeyn
Wel wyllyng in age, for neyghbourhede
Wolde to their neyghbours wo vrs bedde

He wyll in presence of the yonge man
Yet chyde and brall, ye and bourde lay
To bleare his eye, thus he sayth than
To suffre yer olde folyes to play
Your haue I done that I can or may
Thus he sayth, yet buffoonde to dyssemble
That he not no man wolde not mysseme

In worde not dede, neberth him not be cope
It is impossyble that he do amysse
If the yonge man spete, anon he sayth the dope
To rebuke age, presumptuous not this
Thus his olde face and his grattaunce is
Al is in him, sleyght and subtilte
And ferre from reason I tel the

And thertly age is not aboue me
Age is impotent, and of no resystence
Age vnlusty may not fyght nor flye
What were age without my defence
Sadde counsayle sayst gyueth him assistence
Reason is fyrst best where that I dwelle
Wherfore in thy sayeng thou arte to blame

Sythe reason to me is rather accompanyed
Than vnto age, whiche is the opinion
Of euery wyse man not to be denyed
And syth sadde counsayle procedeth of reson
Sadde counsayle in me hath his chefe mansion
This is no nay, but what is the cause
Of this thy surlyon what doest entende

Age to compare vnto thyn excellence
I wyl presume him so to dignyfye
Yf he be not egal, howe be it experyence
Him auauntageth, for the most certaynly
Him teacheth what thyng to him is contrary
And ofte to forse it, and warely eschewe
Whiche thou neuer allay dest yet not knewe

Experyence maketh a man most certayne
Of any thyng erthly, and of necessyte
Sadde counsayle requireth certaynte playne
So ferre to moue thus wherto nede we
But to my purpose, as thou commaundest me
Thertly myne entent is thus, and none other
Vnder thy lycence to counsayle my brother

Howe thu dest gyue any counsayle so yonge
Lacking experience vnto thyne owne speche
I repose me, I wote wel as for thy tonge
Wyl serue the right wel, but than for to teche
I doute me selfe that thy wytte wol not reche
Vnto experience thou sayst be not couert
Howe shuldest than teache wel vnexpert

Scripture testifyeth that god wol ofte shewe
Fro the bye hyd thyng, & therwe it to preche
To him I meane that of his owne wytte
Presumeth not, but is debonayre and mylde
Thy counsayle I entende vertue for to bylde
Vnto him of mine elders parte haue I vsed
And part of experience, which I haue lerned

Wel than, if it be as thou lettest fare
Of his vertue this doctryne be not agaste
I wolde the supporte, loke thou not spare
Yonge age, though he frete or gnaste
Counsayle age counsayle lerne to forbere but wast
Tyl elderly he gyn, go forthe to thy processe
I care not syth thou arte of large entresse

Graunt mercy to be seth it the best selfe
To exercise me, howe I wel and bare of wytte
Assaile my purpose, with scripture and with sawe
Nay wrthe not I, I groude, but desyre to knowe
After my begynnynge, other I wolde not

Flecto with thy fusters, and in especial
To the mother of ielousye Juno Jcal.

¶ Explicit prologus.

His werke who so that se
or rede
Of any incogruite do me
not impeche
Ordinately behoueth me
first to procede
In deduction therof, in
maner as the leche
his pacientes sickenesse oweth first for to seche
The which knowen, me deeme he shuld aplye
And shortly as he can, than shape a remedye

Right so by counsayle, wylling the to exhorte
O yong and prosperous, which doth auoude
In thy floures of lyste belongeth on the sorte
The first to consider what is roote & grounde
Of thy malehele, which is playnly founde
Woman farced with fraude and deceyte
To thy confusyon moste alleyne parte.

Flye the mis woman, lest the the deceyue
Thus sayth Salomó, which knew was fully
The falsherd of women his dayes to conceyue
The trippes of a strumpet ben suerer than oyle
Her throte he sayth soupyed ys oyle of mercy
But the better the ende and effecte of al
Bitter is than any wormwode or gal

Flye the mis woman louyng thy lyste
Ware the straungers blande eloquence
Straunge I cal her thats not thy syste
Her beauty haue no concupiscence
Her countenaunce, pretending benyuolence
Beware her lyghes and eye so amyable
Holde it for feyne, they ben deceyuable

Loo ensample what women be
In their lyghes and countenaunce Goostly
I wol shewe the howe sourys it is
Euery one woman right euenly
Ech of them hathe other ones malady
Therfore was al their daily labour
To be couthe approche next in her fauour

In conuite seasons, as fortune requireth
Secretally they came to se her welfare
And ones it happened, foure them to fyreth
To se their lady they al wolde no spare

Of others comynge none of them were ware
Tyl al they mette, where as they in place
Of her lady sawe the beryed face

To supper serte, ful smalle ther ete
Ful sobre and demure in countenaunce
For there tarred none of hem for any mete
But on his lady to gyue attendaunce
And in secrete wyse some tyght fraunce
Of loue to haue, whiche parfetynge the
Secrely executed thus her propertie

In due season, as she al ware aspied
Euery thyng to execute conuenyent
Her one louer first fremde he vsed
The seconde she offred the coppe ouerlent
The thirde she gaue token frendly
Vnderneth the borde she trade on his foote
Through his cuttayles tolde her meanynge

My loue, might I here aske a question
Of you my maistres, that I were loth to mysse
To you I kele I beleue in conclusion
As muche of trouth can in a woman be
Sythe to answere ye wolde ne be agreued
The matere is bouteful and displesaunt
To answere you I wolde fayne assaye

Of me forsothe this me fyll in mynde
Woman can answere it perteyneth
Vnderstonde of vs beloued was neuer kynde
Our maners paine we passe al we may
At home at lasse I am fayne to pray
And some as me thought ware
Thoughtful sorte, greatly

Some for me sorte that my
Shape are best aferd, some
Tyl I were wonte to be
They penne to deuise, and
Some lady mayde
The seconde lady answered that
Loue per sorte afore. I answere to the

Some other thou demaunde, and we answere all
Which fre per sorte ye, neyghbour per se
Where is true right and loyall
Sende our true aspies, vnder a cloth & dole
Diuerse and we loue ye me not sole
Of loue be proue must passe & the turmite
Our pale be the betwene vs to be absent

Some newe I cal al this forthsome sorte

My paynes t̄ncreafe, my ſorowes to augmēt
For worthy I am to be bare of al comforte
Thus ſythe I haue conſumed and miſpent
Not only my dayes, but my tynfolde talent
That my lord cōmitted me, I can not recom=
I may not to derely abye my negligēce (pēce

By the pathe of penaunce yet wol I reuerte
To the welle of grace, mercye there to fetche
Diſpiſeſt not god the meke contryte herte
Of the cocke crowe, alas þ I wold not retche
And yet is it not late in the ſeconde wetche
Mercy ſhal I purchace by inceſſaunt cryeng
The mercyes of our lorde euer ſhall I ſynge

But wel mayſte thou wayle wicked woman
That thou ſhuldeſt diſceiue thus any innocēt
And in recompence of my ſynne, ſo as I can
To al men wol I make a leue this monumēt
In the wig parte of thy falſhed is myn entēt
For al were to moche, I cannot wel I wote
The cauſe whereby plainly he þ thus wrote

If al the erthe were parchement ſcribable
Redy for the hande, and al maner wode
Were hewed & proporcioned to pennes able
Al water ynke, in daunce or in flode
Euery man beyng a parfyte ſcribe & good
The curſydneſſe yet and diſceyte of women
Coude not be ſhewed by the meane of penne

I ſaye al odyous reſemblaunces
The dyuels bronde cal women I might
Wherby man is encenſed to miſchaunce
Or a ſtynkyng roſe that fayre is in ſyght
Or deedly empoyſon, lyke the ſuger whyte
Whiche by his ſwetneſſe cauſeth man to taſte
And ſodainly ſleeth & brigeth him to his laſte

It is not my maner to vſe ſuche langage
But this my doctrine, as I may lawfully
I wol holly grounde with auctorite ſage
Wyllyng bothe wiſdom, and bewte obey
Vyne and women into apoſtaſy
Cauſe wyſe men to fal, what is that to ſay
Of wyſdome cauſe them to forget the way

Wherfore the wyſe man bothe he aduyſe
In whoſe wordes can be founde no leaſyng
With the ſtraunger to ſytte in no wyſe
Whiche is not thy wyfe, fal not in clyppyng
With her, but beware eke of her kyſſyng
Kepe with her in wyne no altercacion
Leſt that thyne herte fal by inclynacion

May a man thynkeſt hyde and ſafe lay
Fyre in his boſom, without empayrement
And brēning of his clothes, or whether he may
Walke on hotte coles, his fete not brente
As who ſayth nay, and wherby is ment
This foreſayd prouerbe and ſymilytude
But that thou ryddeſt the playnly to denude

From the flatterers forgettyng her gyde
The gyde of her youth, I meane chamfaſtnes
Whiche ſhuld cauſe her maidenheed to abide
Her goddes beheſte eke ſhe ful recheleſſe
Not retchyng, cōmytteth it to forgetfulneſſe
Neyther god ne ſhame in her hauyng place
Fedes muſte ſuche a woman lacke grace

And al that neygh her in way of ſyn
To tourne of grace ſhal lacke the influence
The pathes of lyfe no more to come in
Wherfore firſt frende the with ſapyence
Remembring god, and after with prudence
To thyne owne wele that they the kepe
Vnto thyne herte, leſte her wordes crepe

In his boke where I take my moſte grounde
And in his prouerbes ſage Salomon
Telleth a tale, whiche is playnly founde
In the fyfth chapiter, whether in dede don
Or mekely feyned to our inſtruction
Let clerkes determyne, but this am I ſure
Woche lyke thyng I haue had in vre

At my wyndowe ſayth he I loked out
Fayre yonge people, where I ſawe many
Amonge hem al, as I loked aboute
To a yonge man fortuned I lent myn eye
Eſtraunged from his myndeit was lykely
By the ſtrete at a corner, nyghe his own hous
He went aboute with eye right curyous

Whan that the day his light gan withdrawe
And the nyght approched in the twynlyght
Howe a woman came and met him I ſawe
Talkyng with him vnder ſhade of the nyght
Howe bleſſed be god quod ſhe of his myght
Whiche hath fulfylled myne hertes deſyre
Aſlaked my paynes, whiche were hote as fire

And yet myne auctour, as it is ſkyl
To folowe, I muſte tel her arayment
She was ful nyce, coules lyke to ſpyl

As nyce in countenaunce yet as in garment
For tangilyng she was of rest impacient
Wandringe styl in no place she stode
But restlesse nowe and nowe out she yode

Nowe in the house, nowe in the strete
Nowe at a corner she stonderh in awayte
Incessaumtly besy her praye for to gete
To bring to the lure whom she dothe layte
Nowe where I lefte, vnto my mater strayte
I wol turne agayne, howe she him mette
Swetely kyssed, and frendly him grette

With wordes of curtesye many and dyuerse
Right as in parte I haue before tolde
Nowe as I canne I purpose to reherse
howe she flatteryng sayd with vysage bolde
I haue made bowes & offrynges manyfolde
For thy sake, O myn herte, o my loue dere
This day I thanke god al perfourmed were

Therfore I came out, and made thus aserte
Very desyrous your welfare to se
Nowe I haue sene you, plesed is myn herte
In fayth the shal none haue my loue but ye
As trewe as I am to you be to me
I pray you hertely dere herte come home
No man shulde be to me so welcome

And in good fayth, the sothe for to say
Your comynge to me canne in my thought
Darke in your eare, my bedde freshe and gay
I haue behāged with tapettes newe bought
From Egipte, & from ferre countrees brought
Steyned with many a lusty freshe hue
Excedyng golde or iasper in value

My chambre is strowed with myrre & encēse
With sote sauoryng aloes, & with synamome
Breathyng an aromatyke redolence
Surmountyng olybane, in any mans dome
Ye shal bytwene my brestes rest if ye come
Let vs haue our desyred halsyng
For we may safe be tyl in the morwyng

Myn husbonde is not at home, he is went
Forthe in his iourney, a ferre way hence
I bagge with money he hathe with him hent
As him thought nedeful for his expence
Vnto my worde gyue fayth and credence
Nowe is the moone yonge, & of lyght dulle
Er he come home it wol be at the fulle

Thus craftely hath she him beserte
With her lyme rodes, parter, and snare
The sely soule caught in her nette
Of her sugred mouthe, alas nothyng ware
Thus is he lefte graceles and bare
Of helpe, comforte, and goostly socour
And furthermore, as sayth myne auctour

As a beest ledde to his dethe dothe paste
This yonge man folowyth her in þ̄ stede
And as a wanton lambe fulfigiaste
Howe he is pulled and drawen to be shorne
Vnto the tyme he hath his dethes wounde
And lyke a bryde that hasteth to the gere
Not knowyng the peryl of his lyfe nere

Now gentle sonne sayth Salomon
My wordes in thy breest kepe and marke
Let her not thy mynde in her wayes
Be not disceyued, lese not thy saule
Many hath she wounded, many downe
Many stronge by her hath lost their strēthe
Her wayes, wayes of hel ledyng to derke

And in this lytel naration precident
The womans manyfolde gyle I
The yonge man alas howe he
Disceyued her husbande, her
In these bothe her god she dothe
To breke her shoysale to her
Furdermore to shewe womās

A woman at her dore sat one
To se folke passe by stretes of the
With eye & countenaunce eke
If there be any prety one, come
Come hyther ye pygges nye, ye
At last she sayd to a yonge man
Of her disceyte vnware and

Moche swetter she sayth, & more
Is drunke whan it is stolen priuely
Than whan it is taken in fourme
Breed hyd and gotten ieoperdously
Must nedes be swete, and semblably
Venyson stolne is aye the swetter
The ferther the narower ferre the better

And who this woman sayth Salomon
The yong mā woteth not who she dothe
Of the derke depenesse of hel ben her
Beware yonge man therfore I the rede
And howe be it chefely for thy good spede

This werke to cõpyle, I haue take i charge
I muste of pyte my charite enlarge

With the sely man whiche is thus begyled
Her husbande I meane, I wol wepe & waile
His paynefull infortune, wherby reuyled
Causeleste he is, neuer to counayle
Euery man yonge and olde wol him assayle
With wordes of cccasiõ, with the loth name
And alas good soule, he nothinge to blame

But she that coude to yl do and wolde
Hers be the blame for her demerytte
And leaue that oppiobrious name cokolde
To appiope to him as in dispyte
Ransake yet we wolde if we might
Of this worde the trewe ortography
The very discent and ethymology

The wel and grounde of the first inuencion
To knowe the cacographye we must decrye
Which is sothe and colde in compostcion
By reason, as myghe as I can conveyue
Than howe it is written we knowe belyue
But yet to, by what reason and grounde
Was it of these two wordes compounde

As of one cause to geue iust iudgement
Ethmology let vs first beholde
Ethe letter an hole worde bothe represent
As C, par for colde, and O, for olde
K, is for knaue, thus brutes men holde
The first parte of this name we haue founde
Let vs etymologyse the seconde

As the first fynder meane I am sure
C, for calot, for of, we haue O
L, for lerde, D, for demeanure
The crafte of the enuentour to may se lo
Howe one name signifyeth persons two
A colde olde knaue, cokolde him self bryngyng
And eke a calot of lerde demeanyng

The seconde cause of thympostcion
Of this forsayde name was ielousye
To be ielouse is greatest occasyon
To be cokolde, that men can aspye
And though the passion be very fyne
And of contynuel feruence and here
The patient aye suffreth colde on his fere

And who that is ielous, and aye in a drede
Is ful of melancoly and gallysye
His wyues nose if she mysse trede
He wol cutte of, ye and conspyre
His dethe who that wol her desyre
And whiche she perceyuyng blaseth his gal
And anon his great wodenesse dothe fal

As sone as she hath knytte him that knotte
Howe is he tame that was so ramagious
Mekely sytteth he downe & taketh his lotte
Layde brunowe his lokes so furyous
And he but late as a cocke batayllous
Dare in his quarel, to auenge him bolde
Howe is he called bothe cokc and colde

This sayeng, to al curtesy dissonante
Whiche semeth that it of malyce grewe
In this rude treatyse I wol not plante
As parcel therof, but onely to shewe
The opinyon of the talcatyse shewe
Whiche in yl sayeng is euer mery
No man as I therof so wery

But I as parcel of this my boke
Wol graffe in some sadde counsayle wherby
The wedded man, if he daigne to loke
In it, the better shal moue him gye
And prouyde for his sayde infortunye
Which as I haue sayd, with him complayne
I wol, as partener of his great payne

As moste expedyent to his wele
I wolde al ielousy were abiecte
If he be ielous, that he it coueyle
And in his labour be circumspecte
To knowe her wayes, if they seme suspecte
And not for to breke, for one worde broken
She wol not myssc but she wol be wroken

Forbyd her not, that thou noldest haue done
For loke what thynge she is forbode
To that of al thynges she is moste prone
Namely yf it be yl and no good
Yf it be executed she is nyghe woode
Suche is woman, and suche is her crafte
Her crafte by crafte, labour to defete

If thou hereafter, more a syngle man
Shuldest be ielous if thou haddest a wyfe
I rede not but if thou canst trust woman
For els shuldest lede a careful lyfe
That thou moste forbere shuldc be ful ryfe
Yet I nyl gaynsay marryinony
But Helias rede auoyde vt

That

That is to say, better is in wedlocke
A wyfe to take, as the churche dothe kenne
Than to be vnder the flesches yoke
In fleshly lust alway for to brenne
But as I sayd, for al ielous menne
So they lyue chaste, I holde it lasse yl
That they wedde not, than them selfe spyl

The syngle man whiche is yet to wedde
And not the wedded man, thus I rede
To warne hym nowe he is to fatte spedde
It is to late hym for to forbedde
But let hym take as for his owne nede
Suche counsayle as is hym before tolde
Chefe wordes folowyng eche the beholde

Thy water to kepe the wyse man doth techte
That thou in no wyse let it haue vilue
At a natowre ryste, way it wel fesche
And semblably the woman vnctewe
To gyue her frewalke in all wyse elchewe
If she at large, nat at thyn hande walke
She wol the shame, thou shalt it not balke

Wedded or syngle, thus sayth the wyse man
Her that bothe day and nyght euer moze
Lythe in thy bosome, wyfe or yet lemman
Loue not to bote, lefte thou repent sore
Lest she the bringe into some yll loze
Thy wyfe nat to loue yet I nyl suppoze
But that thou bote not, thus I the expoze

Lo if thou loue her, loue she thyn honeste
Be she not yde, for what wol betyde
If she syttc yde, of very neceslyte
Her mynde wol serche ferre and she wyde
Namely yf she be not accompanyde
Howe accompanyed, not with yonge men
But with maydens I meane or women

Wayden fremaunes be right conuenient
In house to helpe to to her seruyce
In whom she may vse her commaundement
In the reason at her owne deuyce
To teache hem good, yeue her thyne aduyce
To make them but wyues, thus beseruelle
May yet refrayne her from ydlenesse

But bydc not her that thou wolte haue do
Of thyne entent that myght be letting
But crafely encourage her therto
By other meanes, as by commending
And not to moche, but duely mengyng
Bothe prayse and blame, and in thy reason
Fyrst prayse wysely the place and season

Of farthful wyl, and herte ful tendre
One thynge I cal in to remembraunce
Agayne, whiche though my wytte be slendre
After my power and suffysaunce
I purpose to make a purueyaunce
Sythe women of nature ben chaungeable
I reale not ware also discryuable

Be it that thy wyfe be excellently good
That none be better of disposicion
In processe of tyme she must outwe her mode
By some wyfe lyuers instygacion
Dryuers men to the like occupacion
Aplyen daily, mynde and eke herte
From her goodnesse women to peruerte

If thou aspye any suspecte person
Drawe to thy wyfe, be ware in al wyse
Co hym nor her of thy suspecion
Make not one word, though thy herte agryse
Kyndle no fyre, no smoke wol arryse
Though she be of a corrupte entent
She peraduenture is not of assent.

Explicit.

The complaynte of Mars and Venus.

Ladeth ye louers in the meane wyse gray
Lo Venus with hem among you retwes to rede
And Cupides treshe bowe ye ete this day
For who the sone vpynd, than wol they spede
But ye louers that lye in any drede
Fleeth lesse wycked tonges you aspye
Lo yonde the sonne, the candle of iealousye

With teares blewe, and with a wounded herte
Taketh your leue, and sayne Iohn to borowe
Apeseth somwhat of your payues smerte

Tyme cometh efte, ỳ ceſſen ſhal your ſorowe
The glad nyght is worthe an heuy morowe
Saynt Valentyne a foule thus herde I ſing
Upon thy day or ſoone gan vp ſpring

Yet ſange this foule I rede you al awake
And ye that haue not choſen in humble wyſe
Without repenting cheſeth your make
Yet at the leſt, renouyleth your ſeruyce
And ye that haue ful choſen as I deuyſe
Confermeth it perpetually to dure
And patiently taketh your auenture

And for the worthyppe of this highe feeſt
Yet wol I in my bryddes wyſe ſynge
The ſentence of the complaynt at the leeſt
That woful Mars made at the departyng
Fro freſhe Venus in a morowenyng
Whan Phebus with his fyrie torches rede
Ranſaked hath euery louer in his drede

Whylom the thre heuyns lorde aboue
As wel by heuenyſche reuolution
As by deſerte hath wonne Venus his loue
And ſhe hath take hym in ſubiection
And as a maiſtreſſe taught him his leſſon
Cómaundyng him ſeuer in her ſeruyſe
Ne were ſo bolde no louer to diſpyſe

For ſhe forbade him ielouſy at al
And cruelte and boſte, and tyrannye
She made him at her luſte ſo humble & tal
That whan ſhe dayned to caſt on him her eye
He roke in patience to lyue or dye
And thus ſhe bridleth him in her maner
With nothing, but with ſcorning of her chere

Who reygneth nowe in bliſſe but Venus
That hath this worthy knight i gouernaūce
Who ſingeth now but Mars ỳ ſerueth thus
The fayre Venus, cauſer of pleſaunce
He bynt him to perpetuel obeyſaunce
And ſhe bynte her to loue him for euer
But ſo be that his treſpace it diſcouer

Thus be they knytte, and reignen as in heuē
By lokyng moſt, as it fel on a tyde
That by her bothe aſſent was ſet a ſteuen
That Mars ſhal entre as faſt as he may glyde
In to her nexte palays to abyde
Walkyng his courſe tyl ſhe had him ytake
And he prayed her to haſte her for his ſake

Than ſayde he thus, myne hertes lady ſwete
Ye knowe wel my miſchefe in that place
For ſykerlye tyl that I with you mete
My lyte ſtaunt there in auenture and grace
But whan I ſe the beaute of your face
There is no drede of dethe may dome ſmerte
For al your lust is caſe to myne herte

She hath ſo great compaſſion of her knighte
That dwelleth in ſolytude tyl ſhe come
For it ſtode ſo, that ylke tyme no wighte
Counſayled him, ne ſayde to him welcome
That nygh her wit for ſorow was ouercome
Wherfore ſhe ſpedde as faſte in her way
Almoſte in one daye as he dyd in tway

The great ioye that was betwixe hem two
Whan they be mette, there maye no tonge tel
There is no more but vnto bedde they go
And thus in ioye and blyſſe I lette hem dwel
This worthy Mars ỳ is of knighthode wel
The floure of fairneſſe happeth in his armes
And Venus kyſſeth Mars the god of armes

Soiourned hath this Mars, of which I rede
In chambre amydde the palays priuely
A certayne tyme, tyl him fel a drede
Through Phebus that was comen haſtely
Within the palays yates ſturdely
With torch in honde, of which ỳ ſtremes brēt
On Venus chambre, knocked ful lyght

The chambre there as laye this freſhe quene
Depaynted was with white boles grete
And by the light ſhe knewe that ſhon ſo ſhene
That Phebus came to bren hem wt hys hete
This ſilly Venus ny dreynt in teares wete
Embraſeth Mars, and ſayd alas I dye
The torch is come, ỳ al this world wol wyte

Up ſterte Mars, him lyſte not to ſlepe
Whan he his lady herde ſo complayne
But for his nature was not for to wepe
In ſtede of teares from his eyen twayne
The fyrie ſparcles ſprongen out for payne
And hente his hauberke that lay him beſyde
Flye wold he nought, ne might him ſelfe hyde

He throweth on his helme of huge weight
And gyrt him with his ſwerde, & in his honde
His mighty ſpeare, as he was wont to feight
He ſhaketh ſo, that it almoſt to wonde
Ful heuy was he to walken ouer londe

He

He may not holde with Venus company
But badde her ilye leste Phebus her espy

O woful Mars alas, what mayst thou sayn
That in the palays of thy disturbaunce
Arte lefte behynde in parylto be slayne
And yet there to is double thy penaunce
For the that hath thyne hert in gouernaunce
Is passed halfe the stremes of thyne eyen
That ꝑ mere swift, wel mayst ꝑ wepe & cryen

Nowe flyeth Venus in to Cicinius tour
With voyde corse, for feare of Phebus lyght
Alas, and there hath she no socour
For she ne founde ne sey no mauer wyght
And eke as there she had but lytel myght
Wherfore her seluen for to hyde and saue
Within the gate she stedde in to a caue

Darke was this caue, & smokyng as the hel
Nat but two paas within the yate it stode
A natural day in darke I let her dwel
Now wol I speke of Mars furious & wode
For sorow he wolde haue seen his hert blode
Sith ꝑ he might haue done her no companye
He ne rought not a myte for to dye

So feble he wert for hete and for hys wo
That nygh he swelt, he might vneth endure
He passeth but a sterre in dayes two
But neuertheles, for al hys heuy armure
He foloweth her that is his lyues cure
For whose departyng he toke greater eye
Than for al his brennyng in the eyze

After he walketh softely a paas
Complayning that it pyte was to here
He sayde, O lady bright Venus alas
That euer so wyde a compas is my sphere
Alas, whan shal I mete you here dere
This twelue dayes of April I endure
Through icious Phebus this misaduenture

Nowe god helpe sely Venus alone
But as god wolde it happed for to be
That while ꝑ wepig Venus made her mone
Cicinius rydyng in his chyuauche
Fro Venus Palamus might his palays se
And Venus he saluteth, and maketh chere
And her receyueth as his trewe ful dere

Mars dwelleth forth in hys aduersyte
Complayning euer in her departyng
And what hys cõplaynt was remẽbreth me
And therfore in this lusty morowning
As I best can, I wol it sayne and sing
And after that I wol my leaue take
And god yeue euery wight ioye of his make.

¶ The complaynt of Mars.

The order of complaynt requireth skylfully
That ech a wyght that playne proudly
There more be cause wherfore that men playne
Or men may deme he playneth folyly
And causeles alas that am not I
Wherfore the ground & cause of all my payne
So as my troubled witte may it araygne
I wol reherse, nat for to haue redresse
But to declare my grounde of heuynesse

The first tyme alas, that I was wrought
And for certayne effectes hyder brought
By hym that lorderth erthe in trelyaunce
I haue my trewe seruyce and my thought
For euermo, howe dere I haue it bought
To her that is of so great excellence
That what wight ꝑ beholdeth her stedfastnesse
Whan she is wrothe & taketh of him cure
He may not longe in ioye of loue endure

This is no fayned mater that I tel
My lady is the very soueraygne and well
Of beaute, lustes, fredome, and gentylnesse
Of ryche array howe dere men it sel
Of al disporte in whiche men trendle & whel
Of loue and play, and of benigne humblesse
Of fowre of instrumentes of al swetnesse
And therto so wel fortuned and shewed
That throughe ꝑ worlde her goodnes is shewed

What wonder is than though that I be serre
My seruyce on suche one that may me skerre
To wele or wo, sithe it lyeth in her myght
Therfore my herte for euer I to her here
Be trewly for my deth that I not lette
To ben her trewest seruant and her knyght
I flatter nat, that may were euery wyght
For this day ilke her seruyce that I dye
But grace be, I se her neuer with eye

To whom shal I playne of my distresse
Who may me help, who may my hert redresse

That

Shal I complayne vnto my lady free
May ceres, for she hath suche heuynesse
For feare and eke for wo, that as I gesse
In tyrel tyme it wolde her bane be
But were she safe, it were no force of me
Alas that euer louers more endure
For lour so many perylous auenture

For though so be that louers be as trewe
As any metal that is forged newe
In many a case bemyddeth ofte sorowe
Somtyme her ladies wol nat on hem rewe
Somtyme it fal vnlyfly it knewe
They might lightly lay her heed to borowe
Somtyme enuyous folke wronges borowe
Depryuen hem alas, whom may they please
But he be false, no louer hath hys ease

But what auayleth suche a longe sermoun
Of auentures of loue vp and doun
I wol retorne and speken of my parte
The point is this of myn destruccioun
Myn owne lady, my lamentacioun
Is al astray, and nat to whom to playne
O better fwere, o lady sourereyne
For your dysease I ought wel fynden a remedy
Though I none other harme ne dede me

To lufter free made the god that syte so hye
Semeth hym lour other companye
And stareth folke to loue maugre her heed
And them her seyth to aught I can espye
He lafteth nat the contrarying of an eye
And some haue neuer loue in her herd
What meneth this, what is this maruayl herd
Wherto constreyneth he his folke so fast
Thing to desyre but it shulde last

And though he made a louer lowe a thing
And maketh it seme stedfast and lasting
Yet purueyth he in fuche auenture
That ofte myshappeth in his weyning
And that is wonder that so wyse a kyng
Dothe suche harde thinges to his creature
Thus whether lour betide or ese sure
Algates he that hath with loue to done
Hath after wo, than chaungeth his tune

It semeth he hath to louers enuye
And lyke a fyther as men may al day se
Bayteth his angle hoke with some plesaunce
Tyl many a fythe is wode to that he be
Craked therwith, and than at erst hath he
Al his desyre, and therwith al mischaunce
And though the lyne breke he hath penaunce
For with that hoke he wounded is so sore
That he his wages hath for euermore

The broche of Thebes was of suche kynde
So ful of rubies and of stones of Inde
That euery wight that sette on it an eye
He wende anone to wexthe out of his mynde
So fore the beaute wolde his bere bynde
Tyl he it had, him thought he must dye
And whan that it was his than shuld he dare
Suche wo for drede aye while that he it had
That welnygh for the feare he shulde mad

And whan it was fro his possessyon
Than had he double wo and passyon
That he so fayre a iewel hath forgo
But yet this broche, as in conclusyon
Was not the cause of his confusyon
But he hym wrought it enformed it so
That euery wight shuld it shulde haue so
And therfore vnthe worthyest was the bere
And in the conclusyon that was soothe

So fareth it by louers, and by me
For though my lady bare so greate beaute
That I was made to, I had gette her grace
She was not cause of myne aduersyte
But he that wrought her as me semeth
That put suche a beaute in her face
That made me louersen and purchace
Myne owne bane but he me wyte I that I dye
And myne owne wo, but euer I shal be pye

But to you bachelers of renowne
Sith that ye be of my bereth toune
Al be I not worthy to be your mayre
Yet fayne wolde I your fauour purchase
Therfore ye ought haue some compassyon
Of my disease, and take it nat a gaune
The proudest of you may be made ful tame
Wherfore I pray you of your gentylesse
That ye complayne for myne heuynesse

And ye my ladies that benigne be and stable
By way of kynde ye ought to ben able
To haue pite of folke that ben in payne
Some haue ye cause to clothe you in sable
Sith that your empires the honorable
Is befalle, wel ought ye to playne
Some shulde your holy teares fal and rayne
Alas your honour and your empire

Nygh deed for drede, we can her not cheryce

Complayneth eke ye louers al in fere
For her that with vnfayned humble chere
Was euer redy to do you socour
Complayneth her that euer hath be you dere
Complayneth beaute, fredome, and manere
Complayneth her that endeth your labour
Complayneth thilke ensample of al honour
That neuer dyd but gentylneſſe
Kytheth therfore in her some kyndneſſe

The complaynt of Venus.

Here nys so high comforte to my plesaunce
Whan that I am in any heuyneſſe
As for to haue layser of remembraunce
Vpon the man bothe and the worthynesse
Vpon the trouthe and on the stedfastnesse
Of hym whose I am al whyle I may dure
There ought to blame me no creature
For euery wight preyseth his gentylneſſe

In hym is bounte, wyſedome, & gouernaunce
Wel more than any mannes wyt can geſſe
For grace hath wolde so forth his auaunce
That of knyghthod he is perfyte ryghte
Honour honoureth hym for his noblesse
Therto so wel hath fortuned hym nature
That I am his for euer I vow & sure
For euery wyght preyseth his gentylneſſe

And nat withstandyng al his sufficiaunce
His gentylnesse is of so great habundaunce
To me in wyſe in louyng & obeysaunce
And me to serue is al his besynesse
That I am serue in very sykernesse
Thus ought I deme wel myne auenture
Syth that him lyſte me serue and honoure
For euery wyght preyseth his gentylneſſe

Aboue al other louers I ought couenable
To thanke god and fortune at the table
Syth that I am take in speciall grace
Of hym that is the floure of al the place
Of al knyghthod that euer I coude vyſe
Lowest and meekest of al in seruyſe
And trouest and secretest in dyuerſe
And gentylest of al in deedes
For euery wyght preyseth his gentylneſſe

Ielousy he hanged by a table
She wolde al knowe through her espyeng
There dothe no wight nothyng so reſonable
That al nys harme vnder ymagynyng
Thus dere abought is loue in seruyng
Whiche ofte he serueth without ordynaunce
As for the ynough and lyte of plesaunce
Al the seruyce of any gladde lyfe

A lyte true hyre is agreable
But ful acombrous is the bysynes
For subtel ielousy the vnreasonable
Ful often tyme causeth displeasaunce
Thus ben we euer in drede and suffraunce
In no certayne, we langwysshen in penaunce
And haue ful ofte many an harde myschaunce
Al the seruyce of any glabbe lyfe

But certes loue, I take not in suche wyſe
Ther for to stepe out of your lace I myght
For I so longe haue ben your vnder
That for to lyue of myn I neuer thynke
To serue enough in suffysaunce of myght
Syth myn herte is hole vnder your yoke
And therfore certes to conclude, my swete
To loue vnfeyned, that me neuer lyſte

But certes loue, whan I me wel auyse
Of any chaunge that ye may vnderſtande
That I haue made me chaunge in any wyſe
Certes nay, that dare I me wel warande
Ryght wel I wot, that ye ben so habunde
And ouer the whyche ye haue the maystrye
That for me were wel I vnderstande
To loue vnfeyned, that I neuer lyſte

Vnto their grete enough suffyſe
That loue to haue a grete assemble
To whom the worthyest wil serue
And most agreable haue most resort
Ne be no further enuyous in my porte
Syth ye haue suffysaunce inough for store
This wot I vnder your correccion
To loue vnfeyned, that I neuer lyſte

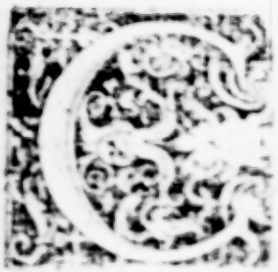
Cleo.

Princes reherseth this complaynyng in grece
Vnto your excellent benyuolence
Therto after my lyttel suffysaunce
For elde, that in my spirite dulleth me
With of rehersyng al the subtylte
Wherwith he hath out of my remembraunce

Ind eke to me it is a great penaunce
Sith ryme in Englyshe hath suche scarcite
To folowe worde by worde the curiosyte
Of Oranfonflour, of hem ỹ make in Fraūce.

Explicit.

Here after folowerh the letter of Cupide.



Upide, vnto whose com-
manndement
The gemyl kyntede of
goddes ou hye
Ind people infernal ben
obedyent
Ind al mortal folke ser-
uen busely
Of the goddesse sonne Cytherea owey
To al the that to our deite
Ben subiectes, hertely greeting sende we

In general we wol that ye knowe
That ladies of honour and of reuerence
Ind other gemyl women hauen sowe
Suche srede of complaynt in our audience
Of men that do hem outrage and offence
That it our rates greueth for to here
So pytous is the effecte of this matere

Passyng al londes on the Isrel yle
That cleped is Albion, they most complayne
They say that ther is croppe and rote of gyle
So con the men dissymule and fayne
With standing dropes in her eyen twayne
When that her hertes feleth no distresse
To blynden women with her doublenesse

Her wordes spoken be so sighyngly
With so pytous chere and countenaūce
That euery wight that meneth trewely
Demeth they in herte haue suche greuaunce
They say so importable is her penaunce
That but her lady last to shewe hem grace
They right anone must sterue in the place

Ih lady myne say they, I you ensure
Is dothe me grace, and I shal euer be
Whyle that my lyfe may last and endure
To you as humble and lowe in eche degre
Is possyble is, and hope al thyng as frete
Right as youe selfe lyste that I do
Ind eis myne herte more brasse a two

Ful harde it is to knowe a mannes herte
For outwarde may no man the trouth deme
When worde out of mouth may none sterte
But it by reson semed euery wyght to queme
So it is sayd of herte as it wolde seme
O fayrthful woman ful of innocence
Thou art disceyued by false apparence

By processe mouch hoste womans pyte
Weuing al thyng were as these men sey
They graunt hem grace of her benignite
For that men shulde not for her sake dey
Ind with good hert sette hem in the wey
Of blysful loue, kepe it if they coue
Ind thus other whyle women bythe fwoune

Ind whan this man the pan hath by the sele
Ind fully is in his possessyoun
With that women kepeth he no more to dele
After yt he may fynde ne be toun
Any woman hys blynde affectioun
Unto bestowe, yuel more be preue
I man for al his othes is harde to beleue

Ind for that euery false man hath a make
Is vnto euery wyght is light to knowe
When this traitour this woman hath forsake
He fast spedeth hym vnto hys felowe
Ch he be there his herte is on a lowe
His false disceyte may hym not suffyse
But of his trayson telleth al the wyse

Is this a fayre auaunt, is this honour
A man hym selfe accuse thus and diffame
Is it good for to confesse hym selfe a traytour
Ind bring a woman to slaunderous name
Ind tel howe he her body hath do shame
So worthy ype may he thus to him conquere
But great disclaunder vnto hym and her

Ch her nay, yet was it no repryse
For al for vertue was that she wrought
But he that wel wold hath al this mischefe
That spake so fayre, a falsely in warde thought
His be the slaunder, as it by reson ought
Ind vnto her thanke perpetuel
That in suche a nede helpe can so wel

Although through mens sleight and subtylte
A sely simple and innocent woman
Betrayed be, no wonder sythe the eyle
Of Troye, as the storie tel can
Betrayed was through the disceyte of man

Ind

And sette on fyre, and al downe ouerthrowe
And finally destroyed as men knowe

Betray nat men cytes great and kynges
What wight is it that can shape remedy
Ayenst these falsely purposed thinges
Who can the crafte suche crafters espy
But man, whose wytte is euer redy and aply
To thyng that sowneth in to falsehede
Women be the ware of false men I rede

And furthermore haue these men in vsage
That where they nat lykely ben to spede
Suche as they ben, with a double visage
They procuren for to pursewe her nede
He prayeth him in his cause to procede
And largely guerdoneth he his trauayle
Lyel wote women howe men hem assayle

Another wretche vnto his felowe sayth
Thou fyndest faire, he that the hath fryed
Is false, inconstaunt, and hath no fayth
Sone for the rode of folke is so desyred
And as an horse fro day to day he is hyred
That whan thou twynnest fro her company
Cometh another, and blered is thyne eye

Howe pycke on fast, and ryde thy iourney
While thou art there, for he behynd thy backe
So it betydeth, he wol nothyng wythsey
But smartly of another take a smacke
Thus fare these women al the packe
Who so hem trusteth hanged mote he be
Euer they desyre chaunge and nouelte

Hereof procedeth this but of enuy
For he him selfe her ne wynne may
He spekeh her reproffe and vylany
As mines blabbing tong is wont alway
Thus by suche men ful ofte make assay
For to disseuer the folke in fondne wyse
For they may nat ethewe her empryse

Many one che wolde for no good
That hath in toune his eyne spent and bled
Whan it is that his lady his asking withstode
Or that he were of her playnly refused
He wayle and payne all that he had mused
Wherfore he can none other remedy
But on his lady thapeth bigin to lye

Euery woman be fayre he is lyght to gete
Cannone say nay, if she be wel yonge
Who so may leyser haue with her to trete
Of his purpose shal he fayle nought
But he on madnesse be so depe brought
That he shende al with open hominesse
That louen women, they doten as I gesse

To slaunder women thus what may profite
To gentylesse namely that hem arme shulde
In defence of women, and hem delyte
As that the ordre of gentylesse wolde
If that a man lyst gentyl to be holde
He muste al eschewe that therto is contrary
A slaunderous tonge is his great aduersary

A foule bree is of tonge to be wyght
For who so moche clappeth gabbeth ofte
The tonge of man so swyfte is and so wight
That whan it is reyled vp on lofte
Reason is ouer ronne so sodeyne and softe
That it him neuer ouertake may
Lo! de so these men ben trusty in assay

Al be it that men fynde one woman nyce
Inconstaunt, recheles, and barrable
Deignous, proude, fulfylled of malyce
Without fayth or loue, and vnreasonable
Slye, queynt, false, and vntrusty culpable
Wicked, fierce, or ful of crueltie
Yet folweth it nat that suche al women be

Whan the hygh god angels formed had
Amonge hem al, where there were none
That founden was malycious and bad
Yes al men were there were many one
That for her pryde fyl fro heuen anone
Shuld me for thy vice al angels proude call
Nay, be that y fulleweth is to blame

Of the clue apostles, one a traytour was
The remenaunt yet good were and trewe
So it vnhappeneth in the prees
O woman false, suche good is to eschewe
And deme nat y they al therfore be vntrewe
If so wel ouermore thine falsenede
Hem causeth women to trust the lesse

O euery man ought haue an herte tendre
Vnto a woman, and deme her honourable
Where his chaye be thynne or tendre
Or he be good or badde, it is no fable
Euery wight wote that wyte hath reasonable
That of a woman he descended is
Thus is it shame of her to speke amysse

A wicked tre good frute may non forth bring
For suche the frute is as is the tre
Take hede of whom thou take thy beginyng
Let thy mother be myrrour vnto the
Honour her, if thou wolte honoured be
Dispyse her than nat in no manere
Lest that therby thy wickednesse apere

An olde prouerbe sayd is in englysshe
That bryde or foule is ful dishonest
What that he be, and holde ful churlysshe
That vseth to defoule his owne nest
Men to say wel of women it is the best
And naught to dispyse hem ne deprave
If they wol her honour kepe or save

The ladyes euer complayne hem on clerkes
That they haue made bokes of her diffame
In whiche they dispyse womē & her werkes
And spoke of hem great reproffe and shame
And causeles yeue hem a wicked name
Thus they dispysed be on euery syde
Disclaundred and belowen on ful wyde

Tho forn bokes maken mencion
Howe women betrayde in especial
Adam, Dauid, Sampson, and Salomon
And many one mo, who may reherce hem al
The treyson that they haue do and shal
The worlde her malyce may not comprehēde
As clerkes sayne, for it hath none cude

Ouyde in his boke called Remedye
Of loue, great reproffe of women writeth
Wherin I trowe he dyd great folye
And euery wight yͭ in suche case him delyteth
A clerkes custome is whan he endyteth
Of women, be it prose, ryme, or vers
Say they be wicked, al knowe he the reuers

And that boke scholers lerned in her childhed
For they of women beware shulde in age
And to loue hem euer be in drede
Sythe to disceyue is set al her corage
They say of parel mē should cast thauantage
Namely of suche as men haue in bewrapped
For many a man by women hath mishapped

No charge is what so these clerkes sayne
Of al her writyng I do no cure
Al her labour and trauayle is in vayne
For betwene me and my lady nature (doure
Shal not be suffred, while the worlde maye
This these clerkes by her cruel tyrannye
On sely women kythen her maystrye

Whylom for many of hem were in my cheyne
Tyed, and nowe for vnwedly age
And vnlust, may not to loue atteyne
And layne :: owe that loue is but very dotage
Thus for they hem selfe lacken corage
They folke enuye by her wicked sawes
For to rebel ayenst me and my lawes

But maugre hem that blame women moste
Suche is the force of myne impression
That sodainly I can fel her boste
And al her wronge ymagination
It shal not be in her election
The foulest slutte in al the towne to refuse
If that me lust, for al that they conne muse

But her in herte as brennyngly desyre
As though she were a ducheesse or a quene
So can I folkes hertes set on fyre
And as me lyst sende hem ioye or tene
They that to women be whet so kene
Wyl sharpe persyng strokes howe they smyte
Shul fele & knowe howe they kerue and byte

Parde this clerke, this subtyl Ouyde
And many an other disceyued haue be
Of women, as it is knowe ful wyde
What no men more, and that is great deyme
So excellent a clerke as was he
And other mo that couden ful wel preche
Betrapped were, for aught that they coude (teche
And trusteth wel that it is no meruayle
For women knowen playnly her entente
They wysse howe sofely they coude assayle
Hem, and what falsheed they in herte mente
And thus they clerkes in her daunger hente
With o venym an other is distroyed
And thus these clerkes ofte were anoyed

These ladyes, ne this gentyls neuertheles
Were none of tho that wrought in this wise
But suche as were bertuleese
They quytten thus these olde clerkes wyse
To clerkes lesse ought suffyse
Than to dispraue women generally
For worshyp shul they none get therby

If that these men that louers hem pretende
To women were faythful, good, and trewe

And

And dredde hem to disceyue, or to offende
Women to loue hem wolde not esche we
But euery day hath man an herte newe
Is on one abyde can no whyle
What force is it suche a wight to begyle

Men beare eke women vpon honde
That lightly and without any payne
They wome be, they can no wight withstõde
That his disease lyst to hem complayne
They be so freele, they may hem not refrayne
But who so lyketh hem may lyghtly haue
So be her hertes easy into graue

To mayster Johan de Moone, as I suppose
Than it was a leude occupacioun
In makyng of the Romaunte of the rose
So many a slyghe ymaginacioun
And perylles for to rollen vp and doun
The longe processe, so many a slygh cautel
For to disceyue a sely damosel

Nought can I say, ne my wytte comprehẽde
That arte, payne, and subtylte shulde sayle
For to conquere, and some make an ende
Whan men a feble place shal assayle
And some also to venquyshe a batayle
Of whiche no wight may make resystence
Ne herte hath none to make any defence

Than more folowe of necessyte
Sythe arte asketh so great engyn & payne
A woman to disceyue what so he be
Of constaunce be they not so barayne
Is that some of these clerkes sayne
But they be as women ought to be
Sadde, constante, and fulfylled of pyte

Howe frendly was Medea to Jason
In conquerryng of the fleece of golde
Howe falsely quyt he her trewe affection
By whom vyctorie he gate as he wolde
Howe may this man for shame be so bolde
To falsen her, that fro his dethe and shame
Him kept, and gate him so great prise & name

Of Troy also the traytour Eneas
The faithlesse wretche, howe he him for
To Dydo, ỹ quene of Cartage was (swore
That him releued of his sinertes sore
What gentylesse might she haue do more
Than she with herte vnfayned to him kydde
And what mischefe to her therof after betidde

In my legende of natures may men fynde
Who so lyketh therin for to rede
That of he ne beheste may man bynde
Of reprouable shame haue they no drede
In mannes herte trouthe hath no stede
The sothe is naught, there may no trouth gro
To women namely it is not vnknowe (we

Clerkes sayne also there is no malyce
Vnto womans wicked crabbydnesse
O woman, howe shalt thou thy selfe chesyce
Sythe men of the suche harme wytnesse
Beth ware women of her frelnesse
Kepe thyne owne, what men clappe or crake
And some of hem shal smerte I vndertake

Malyce of women what is it to dede
They slee no man, distroye no cytees
Ne oppresse folke, ne ouerlede
Betray empires, realmes, or duchees
Ne bryeuen men her londes ne her mees
Empoyson folke, ne houses set on fyre
Ne falle contractes make for no hyre

Trust, parfyte loue, euery charyte
Feruent wyl, and engalented corage
Al thewes good, as lyketh wel to be
Haue women euer of custome and vsage
And wel they conne maners & seruage
With soft wordes, discrete & benygne demeyne
What they be inward they shew outward by

Womans herte vnto no cruelte
Enclyned is, but they be charytable
Pytous, deuoute, ful of humylite
Shamefaste, debonayre, and amyable
Dredeful, and of wordes measurable
What women these haue not parauenture
Folowyth not the waye of her nature

Men sayne our first mother natheles
Made al mankynde lese his lyberte
And naked it of ioye doutelesse
For goddes heste disobeyed he
Whan she presumed to taste of the tre
That god forbade, that she eate therof shold
And ne had the dyuel be, no more he wolde

The enuyous swelling, that the fende out for
Had vnto man in herte for his welthe
Sent a serpent, and made her for to go
To disceyue Eue, & thus was mans welthe
Bytake him by the fende in a stelthe

The woman not knowyng of that diſceyte
God wote ful ferre was it from her conceyte

Wherfore I ſay, this good woman Eue
Our father Adam diſceyued nought
There may no man for diſceyte it preue
Properly, but that he in herte and thought
Had it compaſſed firſt or he it wrought
And for ſuche was not her impoſicyon
Wen may it cal no diſceyte of her by reaſon

Ne no wight diſceyueth, but he purpoſe
The fende this diſceyte caſte, and nothyng he
Than is it wronge to deme or ſuppoſe
That of his harme he ſhulde the cauſe be
Were the fende, and his be the maugre
And excuſed haue her innocence
Sauf onely that ſhe brake obedyence

And trouthe bring this, ful fewe men there be
Vnnethes any dare I ſafely ſay
Fro day to day, as men may al day ſe
But that the beſte of god they diſobay
Haue this in mynde ſirs I you pray
If that ye be diſcrete and reſonable
Ye wyl her holde the more excuſable

And where men ſay in man is ſtedfaſtneſſe
And woman is of her corage vnſtable
Who may of Adam bearr ſuche a witneſſe
Telleth me this, was he not chaungeable
Whan bothe were eten in o caſe ſemblable
Saue wyllyng the fende diſceyued Eue
And ſo did ſhe not Adam by your leue

Yet was this frute happy to mankynde
The fende diſceyued was for al his sleyghte
For aught he coude him i his neyghbes mynde
For his treſpace came fro heuen on heyght
God, to diſcharge man of his weyght
Fleſhe and bloode toke of a virgyne
And ſuffred dethe, him to delyuer of pyne

And god, to whom there may nothyng hyd be
If he in woman knowen had ſuche malyce
As men recorde of him in generalte
Of our lady of lyfe reperatryce
Nolde haue be borne, but that ſhe of vyce
Was voyde, and ful of vertue wel he wyſte
Endowed, of her to be borne him lyſte

Her heaped vertue hath ſuche excellence
That al to leaue is mannes faculte
To declare it, and therfore in ſuſpence
Her dewe prayſyng put nedes muſt be
But thus I ſay, verely that the
Hert god, beſt frende is that to man longeth
The key of mercy by her gyrdle hongeth

And of mercy hath euery man ſuche nede
That refyng that, farwel the ioy of man
And of her power now taketh yet good hede
She mercy may wel, and purchace can
Diſpleſeth her not, honoureth that woman
And other women al for her ſake
And but ye do, your ſorowe ſhal awake

In any boke alſo where can ye fynde
That of the werkes of dethe or of lyfe
Of Jeſu, ſpelleth or maketh any mynde
That women him forſoke for wo or ſtryfe
Where was there any wight ſo entendyte
Aboute him as woman, proued none
The apoſtles him forſoken euerychone

Women forſoke him not for al the faythe
Of holy churche in woman lefte onely
This is no leſs, for thus holy writte ſayth
Loke and ye ſhal ſo fynde it hardely
And therfore I may wel preue therby
That in woman reigneth ſtable conſtaunce
And in men is the chaunge of variaunce

Thou virtuous gême of maydes Marie pure
That of thy bloode bare deth none effuſion
Thou louer trewe, thou mayden manfuete
Thou conſtante woman in thy paſſion
Ouercame the fendes temptacion
And many a wight conuerted thy doctryne
Vnto the fayth of holy god thou virgyne

But vnderſtandeth this, I onely cõmende her
By enchefon of her virgynyte
Truſteth it came neuer in thought
For euer werre I auenſt chaſtyte
And euer ſhal, but lo this meuethme
Her louyng herte, and conſtaunte to her lay
Dyue out of remembraunce I ne may

Who holdeth this for ferme, and for no lye
That this trewe and iuſte commendacion
Of women tel I for no flatterye
Ne by cauſe of pryde or elacion
But onely lo, for this entencion
To yeue hem corage of perſeueraunce
In vertue, and her honour to auaunce

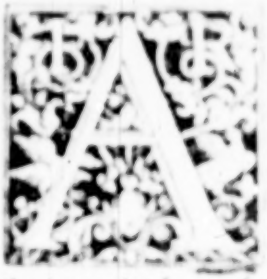
The more vertue, the lasse is the pride
Vertue so digne is and so noble in kynde
That vyce and he wol not infere abyde
He putteth vyces clene out of his mynde
He flyeth fro hem, he leaueth hem behynde
O woman that of vertue arte hostresse
Great is thy honour and thy worthynesse

Than wol I thus conclude and define
We you commaunde our mynistres echone
That redy ye be our helles to enclyne
That of these false men our rebel fone
Ye do punyshment and that anone
Voyde hem our court, & banysh hem for euer
So that therin more come they neuer

Fulfylled be it, ceasyng al delare
Lete there be none excusacion
Writen in the lusty mouthe of Mare
In our paleys where many a million
Of louers erewe haue habytacion
The yere of grace ioyful and iocunde
Thousande foure hundred and seconde.

Explicit.

Thus endeth the letter of Cupyde, and here after foloweth a balade in comendacion of our Lady.



Thou fayre floures coude I moo rehete
Of olde poetes touchyng this matere
Howe that Cupyde the lettres gan to bete
Of his seruauntes lesyng hem in fere
Lo here the fyne of thestour and the lere
Lo here of loue the guerdon and the greuaunce
That euer vnto her seruauntes do auaunce

Wherfore now playnly I wol my tale dyght
Lone to speke, at nede that wol not tayle
Alas for dele I ne can ne may expresse
Her passyng prise, and that is no meruayle
O boynde of grace now blowe vnto my tayle
O aurore lycour of Cleo for to write
Thy penne enspyre of that I wol endyte

Alas, vnworthy I am and vnable
To loue suche one, al women surmountyng
But she be benigne to me and mercyable
That is of pyte the welle and the spryng
Wherfore of her in laude and in prayeyng
So as I can, supported by her grace
Right thus I say, kneelyng tofore her face

O flette of flettes with thy stremes clere
Flette of the see, to thy pylgrym light and gyde
O lusty lyuyng mosse pleasaunce to apere
At whose bright beames the clouds make not
O way of lyfe to hem that go or tyde
Harken after tempest lusted up to true
O me haue mercy for thy loues true

O rightful rule o bore of holynesse
And lightsome lyne of pyte for to playne
O ryal begynning of grace & al goodnesse
And clenest enbaut of vertue most soueraine
Shorter of mercy, our trouble to restraine
Chaunte and defet clymed of the gylte
And sauued herbrough of the beste

O closed garden al borde of wedes bare
Crystallyn welle, of clerenesse eyen and goo
Fourmed dyne of fowles fayre and rare
And redolent rede most best wel to be sayd
Vermynable enfumers that to pyte vs led
O mylde feder of vertue our lyfe to saue
Laurere of lyght enbelysshe vs aboue

O paradyse of plesaunce, gladsome to al good
O mynge braunches of the pyne tre
Vmbrate enuermayled, tetre here of our bote
Creatur ayen al iangourly pale that we be
Ioyful plonte blosome, bryngyng in beaute
O ryuer of mercy on our myserie tende
And as a spase wrappe vs vnder thy wede

O rody rolver, flouryng without fynde
Fouraine al trybleth as beri out in clere
Shede drop of thy graceful dewe to be propyne
O light without nebule, dymmyng the sphere
Enderne to mi cheues pucelle wo at pere
Alambe down & doleful light of thyne ruuee
Remembryng thy seruantes for thy magnyficence

O al chylden protectryce and tutele
Vertume of enuied put in the preterpticion
To hem that erren in the parbe of her sequele
O wery forwandred tene and paurtion
O tayme and so fredbe the paufation
Vnto vnitty, borde rest and remedye

Pppiij Trueful

A balade of our Lady.

Fruteful to al tho that in her affye

To hem that remen thou arte itenerarie
O blyssful braute to knightes of thy werre
To wery werkmen the is diourne denarie
Hede vnto maryners that haue sayled ferre
Laureate crowne stremyng as a sterre
To hem that put hem in palastre for thy sake
Cours of her cõquest, thou white as any lake

O myrthe of martyrs, swetter than sytole
Of confessours also eyther donatyfe
Vnto virgynes eternal lauriole
Afore al women hauyng prerogatyfe
Mother and maide, bothe wydowe and wife
Of all the worlde is none but thou alone
Nowe sythe thou may, be socour to my mone

O trusty turtle trucfastest of al trewe
O curteyse columbe, replete of al mekenesse
O nyghtyngale with thy notes newe
O popynay pured with al clennesse
O lauerok of loue, syngyng with swetnesse
Phebus awayeyng eyl on thy brest he lyghte
Vnder thy wynge at domesday, vs dyght

O rubye rubifyed in the passyon
Of thy sonne, vs haue amonge in mynde
O stedfast dyamentre of duracion
That fende fers any tyme might thou fynde
For none to him was founden halfe so kynde
O hardy herte, o louyng creature
What was it but loue that made ẏ so endure

Semely saphyr, depe loupe & blewe e wage
Stable as the loupe e wage of pyte
This is to say the freshest of vysage
Thou louest vnchaunged hem that serue the
And if offence or varyeng in hem be
Thou arte aye redye vpon her wo to rewe
And hem receyuest with hert ful trewe

O goodly gladed whan that Gabriel
With ioy ẏ gretest, that may not be nombred
Or halfe the blysse who coude write or tel
Whan the holy goste to the was obumbred
Wherthrough fendes were bitterly encombred
O wemlesse may de embelyshed in his byrthe
That man and aungel therof habben myrthe

Lo here the blosme and the budde of glorie
Of which the prophete so lõge spake before
Lo here the fame that was in memorie
Of Elaye, so longe or she was borne
Lo here of David the delycious corne
Lo here the grounde of lyfe in to bylde
Becomyng man our raunsom for to yelde

O glorious byrde and byrte inuyolate
O fury Tyran, persyng with thy bemes
Whose vertuous brightnes was i brest vbiate
That al the world embelyshed with ẏ lemes
Conseruatryce of kynges, dukes, & realmes
Of Isaies sede swete sunamyte
Assure my mournig myn owne Margarite

O soueraignest sought out of Syon
Cockle w golde dewe from aboue betrayned
Dewe bushe vnbrent, fyreleste fyre set on
Flambing with feruẽce, not w hete payned
Duryng daysie that no wether stayned
Fleece vndefouled of gentyest Gedeon
And fructifyeng fayrest thyrde of Aaron

The mighty arche, probatyke pisyne
Laughyng aurore, and of peace olyue
Columpne & base, vp bearyng from chyme
Why nere I comyng here to discryue
Chosen of Joseph, whom he toke to wyue
Vnknowyng him, chylding by miracle
And of our manly fygure the tabernacle

I haue none englysche conuenyent & digne
Myn hertes heale lady the with to honour
Inoure cleane, therfore I wol refigne
In to thyne hande, eyl thou lyst socour
To helpe my makyng bothe flowyshe & flour
Than shalde I shewe in loue howe I brende
In songes makyng, thy name to cõmende

For if I coude before thyne excellence
Syngen in loue I wolde what I fele
And euer standen lady in thy presence
To shewe in open howe I loue you wele
And syth although your herte be made of
To you withouten any discouraunce (dele
Jay en vous tout ma fiance

Where myght I loue euer better beset
Than in this lytle lykyng to beholde
The face of loue, the bonde so wel thou knyt
That I may se the or myne herte colde
And or I passe out of my dayes olde
Tofore syngyng euermore vtterly
Your eyen two wol slee me sodainly

For

For lone I langour, blissed be such sickenesse
Sith it is for you my hertely suffysaunce
I can not els say in my distresse
So fayre one hath myne herte in gouernaūce
And after that I begynne on esperaunce
With feble entune, though it thyne hert perce
Yet for thy sake this letter I do reherse

God wot on maysyke I can not, but I gesse
Alas why so, that I myght say or syng
So lone I you my owne sourrayne maistres
And euer shal without departyng
Myrrour of beaute, for you out thulde I ring
In remembraunce eke of your eyen clere
Thus ferre from you my sourrayn lady dere

So wolde god your lone wolde me so
Sythe for your sake I synge day by day
Perce why nylte thou breake a two
Sith with my lady dwel I ne may
Thus many a roundel and many a virelay
In freshe englythe, whan I me layser fynde
I do recorde, on you to haue myndē

Nowe lady myne, sithe I you lone a dreade
And you vnchaunged euer fynde in o degre
Whose grace ne may flie fro your womanhede
Disdayneth not for to remembre on me
Myne hert bleedeth for I may not you se
And sithe ye wotte my meaning desyrous
Plures par moy si vous plaist amoyous

What marueyle is though I in payne be
I am departed from you my sourrayne
Fortune alas, dont vient la destenie
That in no wyse I cannē may attayne
To se the beaute of your eyen twayne
Wherfore I say, for trulesse doth me graine
Tant me fait male departir de ma dame

Why nere my wissing brought to suche esploit
That I myght say for ioy of your presence
Ore a mon euer ce qui vouillait
Ore a mon euer, the hyghest excellence
That euer had wight, a sithe myne aduertēce
Is in you, reweth on my paynes smerte
I am so sore wounded to the herte

To lyue wel merry two louers were yfere
So may I saye withouten any blame
Yf any man to wylde were
I coude hym teche for to be tame
Let hym go lone and se where it be game
For I am bridled vnto soberneſſe
For her that is of women chefe princeſſe

But euer whan thought my hert shuld enbra
Than vnto me is best remedy ce
Whan I loke on your goodly freshe face
So merry a myrrour coude I neuer espy
And yf I coude I wolde it magnify
For neuer none was so fayre ytounde
To reken hem al, and also Rosamounde

And fynally with mouthe and wyl present
Of double eye without repentaunce
Myn herte I yeue you lady in this entent
That ye shal holly therof haue gouernaūce
Takyng my leane with hertes obeysaunce
(Salue regina synging lasse of al
To be our helpe whan we to the cal

Al our lone is but ydleneſſe
Saue your lone alone, who might therto at
Who so wol haue a name of gentrisse
I counsayle him plone that he nat fayne
Thou swete lady, refuse in euery payne
Whole mercy most to me auaileth
To gye by grace, whan that fortune fayleth

Nought may be tolde without any fay
Your high renome your womanly
Your gouernaunce to al worthy
Quyteth euery hert in case vn
O violet, o floure delyce
Sithe I am for you so amerous
Estreynes moy de cueur ioyous

With feruent hert my trest hath trest
Ardant esploit que mon cuer pourcach
Dauoir lamour de celle que ie desire
I meane you swete most plesaunt et pour
Et ie say bien que ce nest pas mon
Thastoy en synge, so as I may for mone
For your departyng, alone I lyue alone

Thoughe I myght I wolde none other chese
In your seruyce I wolde ben founden fadde
Therfore I loue no labour that ye lese
Whan in longing forced ye be sadde
Loke vp you louers and be right gladde
Auenst sayne Valentynes day
For I haue chese that neuer forsake I may.

Explicit.

A balade to kyng Henry the fourth.

John Gower vnto the worthy and noble kynge Henry the fourth.

Noble worthy kynge
Henry the fourthe
In whome the glad fortune is befal
The people to gouerne
here vpon erthe
God hath the chosen in
comfort of vs al
The worship of this lãd which was down fal
Now stant vprist through grace of thy good
Whiche euery man is holde for to bleſſe weſſe

The highe god of his iuſtyce alone
The right whiche longeth to thy regalty
Declared hath to ſtande in thy perſone
And more than god may no man iuſtify
Thy title is knowe vpon thyne auncestry
The lõdes folke hath eke thy right affirmed
So ſtande thy reigne, of gõd a man cõfirmed

There is no man may fare in otherwyſe
That god hym ſelfe ne hath ꝑ right declared
Whereof the lande is bounde to thy ſeruyce
Whiche for defaute of helpe hath long cared
But nowe there is no mannes herte ſpared
To loue and ſerue, and worthe thy pleſaunce
And al this is through goddes puruyaunce

In al thyng whiche is of god begonne
There folowith grace if it be wel gouerned
Thus tellen they whiche olde bokes conne
Wherof my lord I wote wel thou arte lerned
Aſke of thy god, ſo ſhalte thou nat be warned
Of no requeſt whiche is reſonable
For god vnto the good is fauorable

Kyng Salomon whiche had at his aſkyng
Of god, what thyng him was leueſt craue
He chaſe wyſedom vnto gouernyng
Of goddes folke, the whiche he wolde ſaue
And as he chaſe it fyl him for to haue
For through his witte while ꝑ his reigne laſt
He gate him peace and reſt in to his laſte

But Alexander as telleth his ſtorie
Vnto the god beſought in other wey
Of al the worlde to wynne the victorie
So that vnder hys ſwerde it myght obey
In warre he had al that he wolde prey
The mighty god behight him that beheſt
The worlde wanne, and had it of conqueſt

But though it fyl at thylke tyme ſo
That Alexandre hys aſkyng hath atcheued
Thys ſinful worlde was al paynem tho
Was none whiche hath the high god beleued
No wõder was though thilk world was greued
Though a tyrant his purpoſe myſt wynne
Al was vengeaunce and infortune of ſyn

But nowe the fayth of Chriſt is come a place
Amonge the princes in thys erthe here
It ſytte hem wel to do pyte and grace
But yet it muſt be tempored in maniere
For ther fynden cauſe in the matere
Vpon the poynt, what afterwarde betyde
The lawe of tyght ſhal not be layde a ſyde

So may a kynge of warre the bevage
Ordayne and take, as he therto is holde
To clayme and aſke his rightful heritage
In al places where it is withholde
But otherwiſe yf god hym ſelfe wolde
Affirme loue and peace but were the kynges
Peace is the beſt aboue al erthly thynges

Good is to eſchewe warre, and natheleſs
A kynge may make warre vpon his right
For ſo bataylle the final ende is pees
Thus ſtant the lawe that a worthy knight
Vpon his trouth may go to the fight
But yf ſo were that he myght chooſe
Better is the peace of which may no man loſe

To ſeeke peace ought euerych on lyue
Firſt for to ſette hys liege lorde in reſt
And eke theſe other men that they ne ſtryue
For ſo this lande may ſtande at beſt
What kyng that wolde be the worthyeſt
The more he myght our deedly warre ceaſe
The more he ſhulde his worthyneſſe encreaſe

Peace is the chefe of al the worldes welth
And to the heuen it ledeth eke the way.
Peace is of ſoule and lyfe the manues helth
Of peſtilence, and both the warre away
My liege lorde take hede of that I ſay
If warre may be leſte, take peace on hande
Whiche may not be without goddes ſande

Auth

With peace stant euery creature in rest
Without peace there may no lyfe be gladde
Aboue al other good peace is the best
Peace hath him self whan it is al bestadde
The peace is safe, the warre is euer dradde
Peace is of al charite the kay
Whiche hath the life and soule for to way

My liege lorde if that the lyste to seche
The forth ensamples what ỹ war hath wrought
Thou shalt wel here of wyse ménes speche
That deedly warre tourneth vn to nought
For if these old bookes be wel sought
There myst thou se what thig ỹ war hath do
Lothe of conquest and conqueror also

For warre honour, or for the worldes good
They that whilom the stronge warres made
Where be they now, bethinke wel in thy mood
The day is gone, the night is dethe a fade
Her cruelte which made hem than glade
They forowe now, yet haue nat ynough more
The blode is shad, which no man may restore

The warre is mother of the wronges al
It sleeth the preest in holy church at masse
It rauyth the mayde, and dothe her shame to tast
The warre maketh the great cyte lasse
And doth the lawe his rules ouerpasse
Ther is nothig wherof mischefe may growe
Whiche is not caused of the warre I trowe

The warre bringeth in powerte at his heles
Where the comen people is sore greued
The warre hath set his cart on thilke wheles
Where that fortune may nat be beleued
For whan men wene best to haue acheued
Yet ofte it is al newe to begyn
The war hath nothing lyther tho be wyn

For thy my worthy prince in Chrystes halue
As for a parte whose fayth thou hast be gyde
Ley to this olde sore a newe salue
And do the warre away what so betyde
Purchace peace and set it by thy syde
And suffre nat thy people be deuoured
So that thy name euer after stand honoured

If any man be nowe or euer was
Ayen the peace thy preuy counsaylour
Lette god be of thy counsayle in this cass
And put away the crewel warryour
For god which is of man the creatour
He wolde not men slough his creature
Without cause of deedly forfayture

Where nedeth most, behoueth most to loke
My lorde, howe so thy warres be without
Grete payed, who that hede toke
Good were at home to serche wel about
For euermore the worste is for to dout
But if thou mightest parfyte peace attayne
There shulde be no cause for to playne

Aboue a kyng good counsayle is to praise
Aboue al other thinges most variable
But yet a kyng wt̄in him selfe shal pese
And seen the thinges that be reasonable
And therupon be stall his wittes stable
Among the men to serue peace in ryght
For loue of hym whiche is the kyng of myght

And is him eyse the dede nedes blede
But if it were in cause of right mayntene
For a kynge the poore vnderfonge
What is to sle the people than I grete
The deedly warres and the bryntene
Where peace bitwene is fyl afore
Shulde at some tyme cese and were forbore

O kynge fulfilled of grace and hyghe wisdom
Therefore vpon this poore I crauen leue
If peace be preised, lord thy renowne
Grete honour haue, for it nat be reuoke
Though thou warre hard, and it encrease
Ouer thralom yet remayne the encrease
For lyke to peace there is none auayle

My worthy lorde, thenke wel how
Of truthe lore as here before I sayde
Christ is the herd, and we be membres al
As wel the subiecte as the soueraine
So stant it wel that charite be plaine
Whiche vnto god hem selfe most accordeth
So as the loore of Christes worde recordeth

Tho holde hyne of Christ him selfe was bore
Amonge the x commaundementes I rede
Howe that manslaughter shulde be forbore
Such was the wil that tyme of the godhede
But afterward whā Christ rose his maydede
Peace was the first thing he let do crye
Ayenst the worldes rancour and enuye

And or Christ went out of this erthe here
And stighed to heuyn, he made his testament
Where

A balade to kynge henry the fourth.

Where he bequath to hys disciples there
And yaue hys peace, which is the foudrement
Of charyte, without whose assent
The worldes peace may neuer wel be eryed
Ne loue kept, ne lawe iustyfyed

The Jewes with ỹ paynyms hadden werre
But they among hem selfe stode euer i peace
Why shulde than our peace stande out of erre
Which Christ hath chose vnto his own encrese
For Christ is more than was Moyses
And Christ hath sette the partie of the lawe
The which shulde in no wyse be withdrawe

To vene vs peace was cause why christ dyde
Without peace may nothig stonde auayled
But nowe a man may se on euery syde
Howe Christes fayth is euery day assayled
With paynyms distroyed & so barayled
That for defaute of helpe and of defence
Vnnerly hath Christ his dewe reuerence

The right fayth to kepe of holy churche
The first poynt is named of knyghthode
And euery man is holde for to worche
Vpon the poynt ỹ stante to hys manhode
But now alas, the fame is spred so brode
That euery man this thyng complayneth
And yet is there no man that helpe ordayneth

The worldes cause is weyted ouer al
There be the warres redy to the ful
But Christes owne cause in special
There ben the swerdes and the speares dul
And with the sentence of the popes bul
As for to doue the folke payne obey
The churche is tourned al another wey

It is wonder aboue any mannes wyt
Without war how Christes fayth was won
And we that be vpon this erthe yet
Ne kepe it not as it was first begon
To euery creature vnder the sonne
Christ bad him selfe that we shulde preche
And to the folke his Euangely teche

More lyght it is to kepe than to make
But that the foundement made tofore honde
We kepe not, but let it lyghtly slake
The peace of Christ hath al to broke his bõde
We rest our selfe, and suffren euery londe
To slee eche other, as thyng vndefended
So stant the warre, a peace is not amended

But though the heed of holy churche aboue
Ne do not al hys hole busynesse
Amonge the people to set peace and loue
These kinges oughten of her right wysenesse
Her owne cause amonge hem selfe redresse
Tho Peters shyp as now hath loste his stere
It lythe in hem the barge for to stere

If holy churche after the dewte
Of Christes worde ne be nat al auysed
To make peace, accorde, and vnite
Amonge the kynges that be now deuysed
Yet natheles the lawe stant assysed
Of mannes wytte to be so resonable
Without that to stande hym selfe stable

Of holy churche we ben children al
And euery childe is holde for to bowe
Vnto the mother, howe that euer it fal
Or els he must reason disalowe
And for that cause a knyght shal first auowe
The right of holy churche to defende
That no man shal the priuylege offende

Thus were it good to sette al in euyn
The worldes princes, and the prelates bothe
For loue of hym whiche is the kyng of heuyn
And if men shulde algate werren wrothe
The sarazins, whiche vnto Christ ben lothe
Let men be armed ayenst hem to fyght
So may the knyght his dede of armes right

Vpõ.iii. poyntes stant Christes peace oppressed
First holy churche in her selfe deuyded
Which ought of reason first to be redressed
But yet so hegh a cause is not desyded
And thus whan humble patience is prided
The remenaunt whiche that they shulde rule
No wonder is though it stande out of rule

Of that the heed is sicke the lymmes aken
These reignes that to Christes peace belõge
For worldes good these deedly warres make
Which helpeles, as in balaunce hongen
The heed aboue hem hath nat vnderfongen
To set peace, but euery man seeth other
And in this wyse hath charite no brother

The two defautes stingen in the thyde
Of myscreantes that seen howe we debate
Betwene ỹ two, they fallen in a mydde
Where now al day they fynde an open gate
Lo, thus the deedly warre stant algate

But

But euer I hope of kyng Henries grace
That he it is, whiche shal the peace embrace

My worthy noble prince and kyng anoynt
Whom god hath of his grace so preserued
Beholde and se the worlde vpon this poynt
As for thy part, that Christes peace be serued
So shal thy high mede be deserued
To hym whiche al shal quite at laste
For this lyfe here may no whyle laste

Se Alexandre, Hector, and Julyus
Se Machabeus, Dauyd, and Josue
Se Charlemayne, Godfray, and Arthus
Fulfylled of warre and of mortalyte
Her fame abyde, but al is vanyte
For dethe, which hath the warres vnder foote
Hath made an ende, of whiche ther is no bote

So many a man the soth wete and knowe
That peace is good for euery kyng to haue
The fortune of the warre is euer vnknowe
But where peace is, there is ꝑ marches saue
That nowe is vp, to morowe is vnder graue
The mighty god hath al grace in honde
Without him men may not longe stande

Of the tennes to wynne or lese a chace
May no lyfe were or that the bal be ronne
Al stant in god what thing mē shal purchace
Thende is in hym or that it be begonne
Men sayne the wolle whan it is wel sponne
Doth that the clothe is stronge & profitable
And els it may neuer be durable

The worldes chaunces vpon auenture
Ben euer set, but thylke chaunce of pees
Is so behouely to the creature
That is aboue al other peerles
But it may nat be gette natheles
Amonge the men to laste any whyle
But where the hert is playne without gyle

The peace is as it were a sacrament
Tofore the god, and shal with wordes playn
Without any double entendement
Be treated, for the trouthe can not fayne
But if the men within hem selfe ben vayne
The substaūce of the peace may nat be trewe
But euery day it chaungeth vpon newe

But who that is of charite parfyte
He voydeth al ielousies fer away
And sette his worde vpon the same plyte
Where that his hert hath foūde a syker way
And thus whan conscience is trewely way
And that these ben handled with the wyse
It shal abyde, and stande in al wyse

The Apostel sayth, there may no lyfe be good
Whiche is not grounded vpon charite
For charite ne bedde neuer blood
So hath the warre as there no propette
For thilke vertue whiche is sayd ꝑfyte
With charite so ferforth is acquayted
That in her maye no false semblant be paynted

Cassodore, whose writyng is authorised
Sayth: where that pyte reigneth is grace
Through which ꝑ peace hath al his welth als
So ꝑ of warre he dredeth no manace
Wher pyte dwelleth in the same place
There may no deedly cruelte soiourne
Wherof that mercy shulde hys way tourne

To se what pyte forthe with mercy bothe
The cronyque is at Rome in stylle enprynte
Of Constantyne, whiche is a tale for the
Whan him was lener his owne dethe desire
Than do the yonge children to martire
Of crueltye he lefte the quarele
Pyte be wrought, and pyte was his fyn

For thylke manes pyte whiche he bede
God was pytous, and made him whole al
Sylvester came, and in the same stede
Gaue hym baptyme first in special
Whiche dyd away the synne originall
And al his lepre it hath so purified
That his pyte for euer is magnified

Pyte was cause why this Emperour
Was hole in body and in soule bothe
And Rome also was set in thylke honour
Of Christes faith, so that the leue of lothe
Which hadden be with Christ tofore wrothe
Reteyned were vnto Christes lore
Thus shal pyte be praysed euermore

My worthy liege lorde Henry by name
Which England hast to gouerne & rywhe
Men ought wel thy pyte to proclame
Whiche openlyche in al the worldes sight
Is shewed, with the helpe of god almight
To yeue vs peace which log hath be debated
Wherof the price shal neuer be abated

My

A balade to kyng Henry the fourth.

My lorde, in whom hath euer yet be founde
Pyte, without spotte of byolence
Kepe thylke peace alway within bounde
Whiche god hath planted in thy conscience
So shal the cronyque of thy patience
Imonge the sayntes be taken in to memorye
To the legende of perdurable glorye

And to thyne erthly price, so as I can
Whiche euery man is holde to comende
I Gower, whiche am al thy liege man
This letter vnto thyne excellence I sende
As I whiche euer vnto my lyues ende
Wol praye for the state of thy persone
In worshyp of thy sceptre and thy throne

Not onely to my kynge of peace I wryte
But to these other princes christen al
That erthe of hem his owne herte endyte
And se the warre or more mischefe fal
Set eke the ryghtful Pope vpon his stal
Kepe charyte, and drawe pyte to hande
Maynteyn lawe, and so the peace shal stande.

Explicit carmen de pacis cõmendacione qõ ad landen et memoriam serenissimi principis domini Regis Henrici quarti, suis humilis orator Johannes Gower composuit.

Clectus Christi, pie rex henrici fuisti
Qui bene benisti, cum propria regna petisti
Tu mala bonis bonus bona reddidisti
Et populo tristi, noua gaudia contribuisti
Est mihi spes lata, qõ adhuc per te renouata
Succedent fata, beatet probitate beata
Est tibi nam grata, gratia sponte data
Henrici quarti, primis regni fuit annus
Quo mihi defecit visus ad acta mea
Dia tempus habent finem natura ministrat
Quem virtute sua frangere nemo potest
Vltra posse nihil quãuis mihi bella remansit
Amplius vt scribam non mihi posse manet
Dum potui scripsi, sed nũc quia cuncta senescũt
Turbauit sensus scripta relinquo scolis
Scribat qui veniet post me discretior aliter
Immodo namq; manus et mea penna silent
Hoc tamen in fine verborum quaeso meorum
Prospera quod statuat regna futura deus.

Explicit.

Of the Cuckowe and the Nyghtyngale.

THe god of loue, ah benedicite
Howe mighty and howe great a lorde is he
For he can make of lowe hertes hee
And of hys lowe, and lyke for to dye
And harde hertes he can maken fre

He can make within a lytel stounde
Of sicke folke hole, freshe and sounde.
And of hole he can make seke
He can bynde and vnbynden eke
That he wol haue bounden or vnbounde

To tel hys myght my wyt may not suffyse
For he can make of wyse folke ful nyce
For he may do al that he wol deuyce
And lythy folke to dystroyen dyce
And proude hertes he can make agryse

Shortly al that euer he wol he may
Agayns hym dare no wyght say nay
For he can glad and greue whom hym lyketh
And who that he wol he loweth or syketh
And most his myght he shedeth euer in May

For euery trewe gentel herte fre
That with hymis, or thynketh for to be
Agayne May nowe shal haue some sterynge
Or to ioy or els to some mournyng
In no season so muche as thynketh me

For whan they may here the brydes synge
And se the flowres and the leues spryngе
That bryngeth in to her remembraunce
I manere case medled with greuaunce
And fully thoughtes, ful of great longyng

And of that longynge cometh heynesse
And therof groweth ofte great sickenesse
And for lacke of that that they desyre
And thus in May ben hertes set on fyre
So that they brennen forth in great distresse

I speke this of felynge trewly

And than came the nyghtyngale to me
And sayd, frende forsothe I thanke the
That thou hast lyked me to rescowe
And one anowe to loue make I nowe
That al this May I wol thy synger be

I thanked her, and was right wel apayde
Ye quod she and be thou not dismayde
Tho thou haue herde ỳ cuckowe erth thā me
For if I lyue it shal amended be
The next May, if I be not attrayde

And one thyng I wol rede the also
Ne loue thou not the cuckowe ne his loues so
For al that he hath sayd is strong leasyng
May qō I therto shal nothyng me bring
For loue and it hath do me moche wo

Ye, bse quod she this medicyne
Euery day this May or thou dyne
Go loke vpon the freshe dayesye
And though thou be for wo in poynt to dye
That shal ful greatly lessen the of thy pyne

And loke alway that thou be good and trew
And I wol synge one of the songes newe
For loue of the, as loude as I may crye
And than she began this songe ful hye
I shrewe al hem that ben of loue untrewe

And whan she had songe it to the ende
Nowe farewel qō she for I more wende
And god of loue, that can right wel and may
As moche ioye sende the this day
As any yet louer he euer sende

Thus taketh the nightyngale her leaue of
I pray to god alway with her be (me
And ioye of loue he sende her euermore
And shylde vs fro the cuckowe and his lore
For there is not so false a bryde as he

For the she shewe the gentyl nyghtyngale
To al the brydes that were in that dale
And gate hem al in to a place in fere
And besoughten hem that they wolde here
Her disease, and thus began her tale

The cuckowe, wel it is not for to hyde
Nowe the cuckowe and I fast haue chyde
Euer sythen it was day lyght
I praye you al that ye do me ryght
Of that foule false vnkynde bryde

Than spake o bryde for al by one assent
This matter asketh good auysement
For we ben brydes here in fere
And soth it is, the cuckowe is not here
And therfore we wol haue a parlyment

And there at shal the Egle be our lorde
And other peres that ben of recorde
And the cuckowe shal be after sent
There shal be yeue the iudgement
Or els we shal fynally make accorde

And this shal be without delay
The morowe after saynt Valentynes day
Under a maple that is fayre and grene
Before the chambre wyndowe of the quene
At wodestocke vpon the grene lay

She thanked hem, and then her leaue toke
And into an haut boys me by that broke
And there she sate and songe vpon that tre
Terme of lyfe loue hath with holde me
So loude that I with that song awoke.

Explicit.

Lewde bookes with the foule rudenesse
Syth thus hast neyther beautie ne eloquence
Who hath the caused or yeue the hardynesse
For to apere in my ladies presence
I am ful syker thou knowest her prudence
Ful agreable to al her aborning
For of al good she is the best lyuyng

Alas that thou ne hadest wisdome
To shewe to her some pleasaunt sentence
Syth that she hath through her gentylesse
Accepted the seruaunce of his diligence
Me repenteth that I me hadde in ydlenesse
And leyser als, to make the more florishynge
For of al good she is the best lyuyng

Yeue she her mekele bouth al lowlynesse
Though I be ferre from her in absence
To thinke on my trouth to her stedfastnesse
And to abrege of my sorowes the processe
Which caused is, where of knoweth your wyse
She lyke amōg to norysse me her lusty gyse
For of al good she is the best lyuyng.

Lenuoye.

Aurore of gladnesse, and day of lustynesse
Lucerne a nyght with heuenly influence
Illumyned, rote of beaute and goodnesse

Suspires whiche I estimde in science
Of grace I beseche alege let your wityng
Nowe of all good, syth ye be best lyuyng.

Explicit.

Scogan / vnto the lordes and gentylmen of the kynges house.

My noble sonnes and eke my lordes dere
I your father called vnworthely
Sende vnto you this lytel treatyse here
Writen with myne owen hande ful rudely
Although it be that I not reuerently
Haue written to your estates, I you praye
Myne vnconnyng taketh benignely
For goddes sake, and herken what I say

I complayne me sore whan I remembre me
The sodayne age that is vpon me fal
But more I cõplayne my misspent iuuentute
The whiche is impossible ayen for to cal
But certainly the moste complaynte of al
Is to thynke that I haue be so nyce
That I ne wolde vertues to me cal
In al my youthe, but vyces aye cherysse

Of whiche I aske mercy of the lorde
That arte almighty god in maieste
Beseching to make so euen acorde
Betwyxe the and my soule that vanyte
Worldly lust, ne blynde prosperite
Haue no lordshyp ouer my fleshe to freele
Thou lorde best and perfyte vnyte
Put fro me vyce, and kepe my soule hele

And yeue me might whyle I haue lyfe a space
Me to confyrme fully to thy pleasaunce
Shewe to me thabundaunce of thy grace
And in good werkes graunt me perseueraunce
Of al my youthe forget the ignoraunce
Yeue me good wyl to serue the aye to queme
Set al my lyfe after thyne ordynaunce
And able me to mercy or thou deme

My lordes dere, why I this complaynt write
To you whom I loue moste entyerely
Is for to warne you as I can endyte
That tyme loste in youthe folily
Greueth a wight bodily and goostly
I meane hem that to lust and vyce entende
Wherfore lordes I pray you specially
Your youthe in vertue shapeth to dispende

Plante the rote of youthe in suche a wyse
That in vertue your growyng be alway
Loke alway goodnesse be in your exercyse
That shal you mighty make at eche assay
The fende to withstande at eche affray
Passeth wysely this perylous pylgrymage
Thynke on this worde, and werke it euery day
That shal you yeue a parfyte stoured age

Taketh also hede how ỳ these noble clerkes
Writen in her bokes of great sapyence
Sayeng that fayth is deed wouten werkes
And right so is estate with negligence
Of vertue, and therfore with diligence
Shapeth of vertue so to plante the rote
That ye therof haue ful experience
To worshyp of your lyfe and soules bote

Taketh also hede that lordshyp ne estate
Without vertue may not longe endure
Thynketh eke howe vices and vertue at debate
Haue ben and shal while the worlde may dure
And euer the vycious by auenture
Is ouerthrowe, and thynketh euermore
That god is lorde of al vertue, and figure
Of al goodnesse, and therfore folowe his lore

My maister Chaucer, god his soule saue
That in his langage was so curyous
He sayd that ỳ father whiche is deed and graue
Bequeth nothyng his vertue with his house
Vnto his children, and therfore laborouse
Ought ye be, beseching god of grace
To yeue you might for to be vertuous
Through whiche ye mist haue parte of his place

Here may se that vertuous noblesse
Cometh not to you by way of auncestrye
But it cometh by leful besynesse
Of honest lyfe, and not by slogardye
Wherfore in youthe I rede you ye edefye
The house of vertue in suche a maniere
That in your age may you kepe and gye
Fro the tempest of worldes wawes here

Thynketh

Onsyder well euery cyr-
cumstaunce
Of what estate so euer
thou be
Ryche, stronge, or migh-
ty of puissaunce
Prudent or wyse, discret
or besy
The dome of folke in sothe thou may nat flye
What euer thou dost trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

For in thy porte or in thyne apparayle
If thou be gladde and honestly be sayne
Among the people of malyce wol not fayle
Without aduyce or treason for to sayne
That thyn array is made & wrought i bayne
What suffre hem speke, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

Thou wolde to kynges be equiualent
With great lordes ruyn and peregal
And yf thou be rorne and al to rent
Than wol they say, and iangle ouer al
That thou art a flogarde ỳ neuer thryue shal
Yet suffre hem speke, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If it befal that thou take a wyfe
They wol falsly say in their entent
That thou art lykely euer to lyue in stryfe
Voyde of al rest, without alegement
Wyues hem mayster, this is their iugement
Yet suffren their speche, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If thou be fayre and excellent of beaute
Yet wol they say that thou art amorous
If thou be foule and vglye on to se
They wol affyrme that thou art vicyous
The peoples langage is so dispytous
Suffre al their speche, and truste wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If so be that thou of parfyt meke
Haue auowed to lyue in chastyte
Than wol folke of thy persone enprise
That thou art impotét tendre in thy degre
And thus whether thou be chaste or delaute
Suffre hem speke, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amys

If thou be fatte or corpulent
Than wol they say thou arte a glotton
A dronkarter, or elis dronkelent
If thou be megre or leane of fashyon
Cal the a nygarde in their opinyon
Yet suffre them speke, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If thou be ryche, some wol reue the laude
And say it cometh of prudent gouernaunce
And some wol say it cometh of fraude
Or by sleyght, or by false chyrysaunce
To say the worst, folke haue so gret plesaunce
What suffre hem say, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

If thou be sadde or sobre of countenaunce
Men wol say thou thinkest some treason
And if thou be gladde of dalyaunce
Men wol deme it dissolution
Calling fayre speche adulacion
Yet let hym speke, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

And who that is holy by prudence
Men of malyce wol cal him hypocrite
And who that is mery of lyfe conuersyon
Men say in tyot he doth him delyte
Some mourne in black, some laugh i white
What suffre him say, and trust wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

Who speketh muche is holden prudent
And who debateth, men say that he is lorde
And who that saith lytel with great argument
Some men yet wol wyte him of folye
Trouth is put down, and now gone astray
And who ỳ list plainly know ỳ trouth of this
It is a wicked tonge, that alway sayth amis

For though a man were as parfyt
As was Dauid thorowe humylite
Or with Salomon in wisdome as prudent
Or in knyghthode egal with Iosue
Or manly proued, as Judas Machabe
Yet for al that, trust right wel this
A wycked tonge wol alway say amis

And though a man had the high prowesse
Of worthy Hector, Troyes champyon
The loue of Troylus, or the kyndnesse
Or of Cesar the famous high renoun
With al his saunders domynacyoun
Yet for al that trust right wel this
Some wicked tonge wol say of him amis

Or

Or thought a man of high or lowe degre
Of Tullius had the sugred eloquence
Or of Seneca the great morality
Or of Caton the forsyght and prouidence
The cõquest of Charles, Artures magnificẽce
Yet for al, that trust right wel this
Some wycked tonge wol say of him amis

The wyfely trouth of Penelope
Though they it had in her possession
Holynesse, beautie, the kyndnesse of Medee
The lyfe vnfayned of Marcia Caton
Or of Alcest the trewe affection
Yet dare I say, and trust right wel this
A wycked tonge wol say of her amis

Than sythen it is so, no man may eschewe
The swerde of tonge, but it kerue and byte
Ful harde it is a man for to remewe
Out of their daunger hym for to aquyte
Vs to the tonges that hem so delyte
To hynder or clauder, & set their study i this
And their pleasances to do and say amis

Moste noble princes, cherysshers of vertue
Remembreth you of hygh discretion
The fyrst vertue and moste pleasyng to Jesu
(By the writyng and sentence of Caton)
Is a good tonge in his opinyon
Chastyse the reuerse, and of wisdome do this
Withdraw we your herynge frõ al þ sayn amis.

¶ Et sic est finis.

¶ Thus endeth the workes of Geffray Chaucer.

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Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum.

¶ Epitaphiũ Galfridi Chaucer, per poetã tratum Stephanum Surigonum Mediolanẽsem in decretis licenciatum.

Perides muse si possint numia fletus
Fundere, diuinas arqz rigare genas.
Galfridi vatis chaucer crudelia fata
Plãgeret: et lachrymis abstinuisse nephas.
Ings soluit diues: at vos celebrate sepultum
Laudatur merito gracia digna viro.
Grãde decus vobis est docti musa Maronis
Qua didicit melius lingua latina loqui.
Grãde, nouũqz decus chaucer, famãqz parauit
Heu quãtum fuerat prisca Britanna rudis
Reddidit insignẽ materius versibus, vt tam
Aurea splendescat, ferrea facta prius.
Hunc latuisse virũ nil, si tot opuscula vertes,
Directis, egregius qui decorata modis,
Socratis ingenium, vel fontes Philosophie,
Quicquid et archami dogmata sacra ferũt.
Et quascũqz velis, tenuit dignissimus artes
Hic vates, paruo conditus hoc tumulo.
Ah laudis quãtum preclara Britãnia perdis,
Dum rapuit tantum mors odiosa virum,
Crudeles parce, crudelia fila sorores,
Non tamen extincta corpora, fama perit.
Viuet in eternum, viuent dum scripta poete:
Viuant in eterno tot monumenta die.
Si qua bonos tãgit pietas, si carmine digna
Carmina qui tecinit tot cumulata modis,
Hec sibi marmoreo scribãtur verba sepulchro
Hec maneat laudis sarcina summa tue.
Galfridus Chaucer vates, et fama poesis
Materne, hac sacta sum tumulatus humo.

Post obitum Caton voluit te viuere cura
Willelmi, Chaucer clare poeta tui,
Nam tua non solũ cõpressit opuscula formis
Has quoqz sed laudes tussit hic esse tuas.